# How to Read the Prophets

## Part V.

## Isaiah. (Ch. XL-LXVI)
## and
## The Post-Exilian Prophets

Buchanan Blake B.D.

# Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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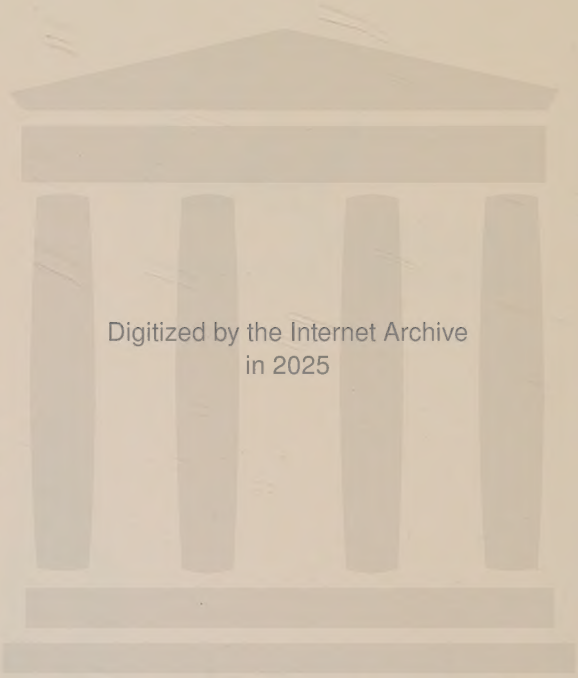
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# HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS.

## PART V.

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# HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

BEING THE PROPHECIES
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN THEIR
HISTORICAL SETTING
WITH EXPLANATIONS AND GLOSSARY

BY THE
REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.

PART V.

ISAIAH (XL.-LXVI.) AND THE POST-EXILIAN PROPHETS.

EDINBURGH
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# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WITH this volume we conclude our present plan of presenting the prophetic writings of the Old Testament in their Chronological order. In the four previous parts, which have been already issued, the Pre-Exilian Minor Prophets, the I. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel have been dealt with on a similar plan; in this the same method has been applied to the treatment of II. Isaiah, Daniel, and the Post-Exilian Minor prophets. Thus we have a prophetic Pentateuch.

The entirely popular character of our plan should ever be borne in mind. It is felt that the Christian laity should take special interest in the Old Testament prophets, and these volumes have been prepared almost entirely for their benefit. Many have felt the perplexity attendant upon reading the Old Testament, as it stands, and have called for some popular and easily understood arrangement, which by setting prophecy and history in their own light, and in close proximity, would make both alike more intelligible and profitable to the ordinary reader. A continuous reading of the prophets is here given. Scholars have indeed found the arrangement given in previous volumes useful to them while consulting larger works, but the aim of the author was to help others. Hence, while endeavouring to bring his information, as far as possible, up to date, he has wholly avoided the use of technical words, and references to critical differences. These have been weighed, and a consensus view has been sought after. This, of course, is not always to be obtained. The canon of spiritual profit has been largely made use of in determining the meaning of

passages, for the prophets were above all men deeply interested in contributing to the spiritual profit of their own generation.

The period that passes under review in this volume is one of the deepest interest. It is the time of the Return and Restoration from Captivity. The placing of the second portion of Isaiah (XL. to LXVI.) in this period gives it a force and graphic significance of highest value; while the reading of the book of Daniel as consisting of two parts, the one part historical, the other apocalyptic, is extremely helpful. The contemporaneous character of the prophecies, and the directness with which they deal with their times is most striking. As to "Daniel," the two parts doubtless came from the same author, the book being a complete whole as it lies before us. In this volume we deal only with the first eight chapters of Zechariah, the closing six, with their two burdens, having been placed in the Pre-Exilic period and dealt with in Part I. of this series. Chaps. XXIV.-XXVII. of Isaiah assigned now by most critics to a Post-Exilic date are found in Part II., while Joel, about the date of which so much discussion has taken place, is found at the close of Part I.

*Note.*—The names of persons and places, printed in black type in the text, are referred to in the Glossary, in the order in which they occur.

# DIVISION I.

## THE TEXT OF THE POST-EXILIAN PROPHECIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Notes of Preparation for Restoration.

**Introductory words of good cheer. First Voice.**

Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God!
Speak home to the heart of Jerusalem, yea, call to her:—
"Your time of trouble is over! Your guilt is cancelled!
"You have received from Jehovah's hand double for all your sin!"

**The Second Voice.**

Hark! One is calling!
In the wilderness prepare ye the Way of Jehovah!
In the desert make straight a Highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled up! Every mountain and hill be levelled!
Yea, the rugged shall be made smooth—the rough places a plain!
And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed! All flesh together shall see it!
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken.

**The Third Voice.**

Hark! One is saying, Call!
And he said, "What shall I call?"
"All flesh is grass! All its glory as the flower of the field!
The grass withereth! The flower fadeth!
When the breath of Jehovah blows upon it! Surely man is grass!
The grass withereth! The flower fadeth!
But the Word of our God endureth for aye!"

**The Fourth Voice.**

O thou that bringest **Zion** good tidings, up to a high hill!
O thou that bringest Jerusalem good tidings, lift up thy voice aloud!
Up! Be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah:—
Behold your God! Behold **Jehovah!**
Jehovah cometh in power! His arm shall be seen in might!
Behold! His reward is with Him! His retribution before Him!
Shepherd-like He guards His flock! In His arm he takes the lambs!
He carries them in His bosom—the mothers, He gently leads! (Isaiah, Ch. xl. 1-11.)

**The glory of Israel's God.**

It is He who hath measured the waters in His palm! The heavens meted with a span!
He hath held the dust of the earth in a small measure!
He hath weighed the mountains in scales—the hills in a balance!
It is He who hath guided the Spirit of Jehovah—as His adviser advised Him!

With Him He took counsel! By Him was He instructed and taught as to the **right**;
By Him was He taught knowledge, and made to know all wisdom!

Lo! The nations are as a drop of a bucket! They are counted as the dust of the balance!
Behold! The sea-coasts—they are as a speck that riseth up!
Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts for an offering!
All the nations are as nothing before Him! Of nothing, and vanity are they to Him!

**Idolatry irrational.**

To whom then will ye liken God? What likeness place beside Him?
The idol! The founder hath cast it! The goldsmith hath gilded it!
And chains of silver he hath made for it!
He that is impoverished as to giving chooseth a tree that will not rot;
He seeketh for himself a skilled workman to make an idol that will not totter.

Do ye not know? Do ye not hear? Has it not been told you of old?
Have ye not understood the founding of the earth?
It is He who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and its dwellers are as grasshoppers!
He stretcheth out the heavens as a carpet, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in!
He bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity,

Scarcely are they planted—scarcely are they sown—scarcely is their root in the ground
When He breatheth upon them, and they wither,—the storm driveth them away as stubble.

To whom, then, will ye liken Me? That I may be like? Saith the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high, and see! It is He who hath made these!
He bringeth forth their host by number! He calleth them all by name!
Because He is great in power, and mighty in strength, not one is missing! (Ch. xl. 12-26.)

**The people's despair rebuked.**

Why art thou saying, O Jacob! Why art thou speaking, O Israel?
"My way is hidden from Jehovah! My cause is ignored by God!"

Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard?
An eternal God is Jehovah! He who is the maker of the ends of the earth,
He fainteth not, nor is weary! Unsearchable is His understanding!
He giveth strength to the faint; yea, to him who has no might, He giveth much!
Young men grow faint, and weary; yea, choice ones do stumble!
But those who wait on Jehovah renew their strength; they soar like eagles!
They run, and are not weary; they walk, and are not faint. (Ch. xl. 27-31.)

**A challenge to the Nations.**

Keep silence before Me, ye Coastlands! Let the peoples
recruit their strength!
Let them draw near! Then let them speak!
Let us come together to trial!
Who hath raised up from the East him whom the righteous
One calls to His feet?
He giveth nations before him! He maketh him to rule
over kings!
He giveth them like dust to his sword, like driver's stubble
to his bow!
He pursueth them! He passeth in peace a way he had
never trodden!
Who hath wrought, and done it?
He who calls forth the generations of men from before-
hand;
I, Jehovah, am the first, and with the last, I am He.
The coastlands saw and feared! The ends of the earth
were afraid!
They drew near, and came to battle!
They helped every one his neighbour, and said to his brother,
Be strong!
The caster strengtheneth the smith; the smoother the
hammerer,
Saying of the soldering, It is good! He fasteneth it with
nails,
That it may not be moved! (Ch. xli. 1-7.)

**The security of Israel. A word of comfort.**

But thou, O Israel! art My servant! O Jacob—thee have
I chosen!
Thou art the seed of Abraham, My friend!

I took thee from the ends of the earth, and called thee from its corners!
And I said unto thee, Thou art My servant!
I have chosen thee, and not despised thee.
Fear not, for I am with thee! Be not dismayed, for I am thy God!
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee
With the right hand of My righteousness!
Behold! they are ashamed, and confounded—all who were incensed against thee!
They are as nothing! Yea, they are destroyed, who strove with thee!
Thou shalt seek them, and not find them—those who contended with thee!
They are as nothing, and vanity—those who fought with thee!
For I, Jehovah, thy God, hold thy right hand!
I am saying to thee, "Fear not! I will help thee!"

Fear not, thou worm of Jacob! Ye few men of Israel!
I will help thee, saith Jehovah! Yea, thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel!
Behold! I make thee a threshing instrument, sharp, new, double edged,
Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small;
Thou shalt make the hills as chaff!
Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away,
Yea, the whirlwind shall scatter them!
And thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah! In the Holy One of Israel shalt thou glory!

**The people's necessity met.**

The poor, and the afflicted are seeking water! And there is none!
Their tongue is failing them for thirst!
I, Jehovah, will answer them! I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them!
I will open rivers on bare hills, yea, springs in the midst of the valleys!
I will make the wilderness a pool of water—a dry land water courses!
I will plant in the wilderness cedars, acacias, myrtles, and oleasters!
I set in the desert cypress trees, plane trees, and sherbin trees together,
That they may see and know, understand and perceive together,
That the hand of Jehovah hath done this—that the **Holy One** of Israel hath made it. (Ch. xli. 8-20.)

**A second appeal to the Nations. Oracles.**

Produce your case, saith Jehovah; bring forth your proofs, saith the King of Jacob!
Let them bring them forth, and show us what is to happen.
Let them make known things beforehand, that we may understand,
And perceive the things that are to follow, or tell us the future.
Make known what is to be afterwards, that we may know you to be gods.
Either do good or do evil, that we may look at each other, and see!

**No response.**

Behold! ye are of nothing! And your work is of vanity!

**The control of history is with Jehovah.**

I have raised up one from the **North**, and he cometh.
From the rising of the Sun, one **called** by his name.
He will come against princes as upon mortar—as the potter treadeth clay.

Who hath made known beforehand, that we may know?
And in advance that we may say, It is right!
Yea, there is none that showeth—there is none that maketh known,
There is not one that heard your words!
I beforehand said to Zion, Behold! Behold! There it is!
And to Jerusalem I appointed a herald of good news.
For I looked, and there was none! Even among them there was no counsellor!
Not one whom I might ask, and who would give Me an answer.
Behold! They are altogether nothing; their work is vanity.
Wind and emptiness—their molten images!

(Ch. xli. 21-29.)

**The Servant of Jehovah described.**

Behold! My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one, in whom I delight!
I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth right to the nations.
He will not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
A bruised reed he will not break; the smoking wick he will not quench.

He will bring forth right according to truth.
He will not fail, nor be bruised until he establish the right in the land,
And the coastlands shall wait for his law.

**The Servant addressed.**

Thus saith the God, Jehovah, who made and stretched out the heavens;
He who spread forth the earth, and the things that grow upon it;
He who gave breath unto the people upon it, spirit to them that dwell thereon.
I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness; I have taken thy hand;
I have kept thee, and given thee for a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.
To open blind eyes, to bring forth the prisoners from the prison,
Those that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.
I am Jehovah; that is My name: My glory will I not give to another,
Nor My praise to graven images.
The first steps! Behold they come! Yea, new things do I declare.
Before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

(Ch. xlii. 1-9.)

**A hymn of praise called for.**

Sing to Jehovah a new song! Praise Him from the end of the earth!
Ye that sail the sea, and its fulness! Ye coastlands, and ye who dwell thereon;

Let the **Wilderness** and its towns shout aloud,—villages in which **Kedar** dwells.

Let those that dwell in **Seba** exult; let them cry out from the top of the mountains,

Let them give glory to Jehovah, and proclaim His praise in the coastlands!

Jehovah goeth forth as a mighty one! As a man of war he stirreth up His zeal!

He will cry aloud, nay, sound a battle-cry! He will overcome His foes!

**The work of Jehovah.**

Silent have I been a long time! I have been still, and under restraint;

I will cry like a woman in travail! I will both pant and gasp together.

I will make mountains and hills waste! I will dry up all their herbs!

I will turn rivers into coasts, and dry up the lakes!

I will bring the blind by a way which they knew not;

I will lead them in paths that they have not known;

I will make darkness light before them, and rough places plain.

These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

They are turned back—they are filled with shame, that trust in images,

Those that say to the molten image, "Thou art our God."

(Ch. xlii. 10-17.)

**An appeal to the Servant.**

Hear, ye deaf! And look up, ye blind, that ye may see!

Who is blind, but My servant? And deaf as My Messenger, whom I send?

Who is blind like the **devoted** one? Blind as Jehovah's servant?

Thou hast seen many things, but not heeded; ears are opened, but nothing is heard.

Jehovah was well pleased for His righteousness sake to magnify the law, and honour it.

Yet it is a people robbed, and plundered! Snared in holes, and hid in prisons,

They are for a prey, and none delivereth! For a spoil, and none saith, Restore!

Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken, and heed for the future?

Who gave up Jacob to be plunder, and Israel to the robbers?

Was it not Jehovah, against whom we have sinned?

Yet they would not walk in His ways, nor be obedient to His law.

Therefore He poured upon them His furious anger, and the strength of war.

Yea, this set them on fire round about, and they knew it not.

And it burned them, but they laid it not to heart.

But now, saith Jehovah, thy Creator, O Jacob! and thy Maker, O Israel.

Fear not, for I have redeemed thee! I have called thee by name; thou art Mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I am with thee;

And through the rivers, they do not overflow thee;

When thou walkest through the fire, thou art not burned,

And the flame doth not kindle upon thee.

For I Jehovah am thy God. I, the Holy One of Israel, am thy deliverer.

I give up **Egypt** for thy ransom,—Ethiopia, and Seba in thy stead.
Because thou art precious in My sight, honoured, and loved,
I give up men in thy stead, and peoples for thy life.
Fear not! For I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the East;
I will gather thee from the West.
I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back.
Bring My sons from afar—My daughters from the ends of the Earth.
All whom I have called by My name, and created for My glory,
All whom I have formed, yea, made complete.
Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. (Ch. xlii. 18-xliii. 8.)

**Not the work of the heathen nations.**

All ye nations, be assembled! And be gathered, ye peoples!
Who among you can declare this, and show us the first things?
Bring forth your witnesses, that ye may be justified;
Or hear, and say, It is true!
Ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah, and My servant whom I have chosen;
That ye may know, and believe Me, and understand that I am He;
Before Me no God was formed, and after Me there shall be none.
I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside Me, there is no deliverer.

I have declared, and have saved, and have showed, and there is no stranger among you.
Yea, ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God.
Also from this day am I He—none shall deliver out of My hand.
I will work, and who shall hinder it?
(Ch. xliii. 9-13.)

**The overthrow of Babylon now foretold.**

Thus saith Jehovah, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel!
For your sakes I send to Babylon, and will hurl them all down in flight,
Even the Chaldæans in the boats of their **delight**.
I, Jehovah, am your Holy One! I, the Creator of Israel, am your King.
Thus saith Jehovah—He who maketh a way in the sea, in the mighty waters a path,
Who leads forth the chariot and horse, the army and the brave—
They lie down together, they shall not rise! They are no more, they are quenched as tow!
Remember not the former things! Think not upon the things of old!
Behold! I am doing a new thing! Now it will appear! Will ye not know it?
I will surely make a way in the Wilderness, rivers in the desert.
Wild beasts shall honour Me! Jackals and ostriches!
For I give waters in the Wilderness—rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen one!
This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise. (Ch. xliii. 14-21).

**The people rebuked.**

Yet thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob! Yea, thou hast not wearied thyself for Me, O Israel!

Thou hast not brought Me the sheep of thy burnt-offerings, nor honoured Me with thy sacrifices;

I have not burdened thee with meal offerings, nor oppressed thee with incense.

Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane for money, nor satisfied Me with the fat of thy sacrifices;

Nay, thou hast wearied Me with thy sins—harassed Me with thy misdeeds.

Yet I, I Myself, blot out thy transgressions for Mine own sake,

I will not remember thy sins.

Remind Me! Let us together go over them! Tell Me them, That thou mayest be justified.

Thy first father sinned! Thy leaders transgressed against Me.

Therefore have I profaned the princes of the Sanctuary!

I have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches!

Yet now hear, Jacob, My servant! And Israel, My chosen one!

Thus saith Jehovah, who made, and formed thee—He will help thee.

Fear not, Jacob My servant! And **Jeshurun**, My chosen one!

For I pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;

I pour out My Spirit upon thy seed,—My blessing upon thine offspring,

And they spring up as the grass, as willows by the water brooks.

One shall say, I am Jehovah's! And another shall call himself Jacob.
A third shall give himself to Jehovah, and surname himself Israel. (Ch. xliii. 22—xliv. 5.)

**The supremacy of Jehovah.**

Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts.
I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.
Who proclaims as I? Let him declare it, and set it before Me!
Since I founded the people of old.
And the things that are to come, and will come, let them declare!
Fear not, neither be afraid! Have I not forewarned you, and told you?
And ye are My witnesses—is there a God beside Me?
Yea, there is no Rock—I know not any.

**The vanity of idolatry.**

The makers of images are all vanity—what they delight in is of no use!
Their witnesses see not, and know not, that they may be ashamed.
Who hath formed a god, or made an idol! To be of no use!
Lo! All that trust in it shall be ashamed; its makers are but men!
Let them come, and stand up! They shall fear, and be ashamed together!
The smith—he takes a chisel, and works in the heat,
And he shapes it with hammers, working with all his might.

He is also hungry, and exhausted! He drinketh not, and is faint!

The carpenter—he draweth the line, and marks it with pencil,

He smootheth it with planes, and marks it with a compass,

He maketh it thus after the model of a man, like the beauty of a man to dwell in a house.

One cutteth him down cedars, and taketh an ilex or oak,

He chooseth for himself among the trees of the forest;

He planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

It serves a man for fuel; he takes part of it, and warms himself.

He also heats it, and bakes bread! He makes a god, and worships it!

He makes a graven image, and falls down before it!

A part of it he burns in the fire; upon part he eats flesh;

He roasts roast and is satisfied! Yea, he warmeth himself!

And saith, "Ah! I am warm! I have seen the fire!"

The rest he maketh into a god for a graven image—he falleth down,

He worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith,

"Deliver me; for thou art my god."

They know not! They understand not!

He hath prevented their eyes from seeing, their hearts from perceiving!

Not one thinketh! There is no knowledge, or understanding!

To say, Part I have burnt in the fire; yea, have baked on its coals!

I have roasted, and eaten. And the rest of it!

I make it an abomination! The trunk of a tree I worship!

Delighting in ashes! A deceived heart has led him astray!
He delivers not his own soul, nor says, Is there not a lie in my right hand? (Ch. xliv. 6-20.)

**An exhortation to Israel to remember God.**

Remember this, O Jacob! O Israel, for thou art My servant!
I have formed thee for My servant! O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten by Me.
I have blotted out as a mist thy trangressions, thy sins as a cloud!
Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee.
Sing, O heavens, for Jehovah hath wrought! Shout, ye depths of the earth!
Break forth into singing, O mountains! O forest, and all thy trees!
Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob! He shows Himself glorious in Israel!
Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer! He that formed thee from the birth!
I, Jehovah, am He that maketh all things—that alone stretcheth forth the heavens,
That spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself.
That brings to nought the signs of false prophets, and makes diviners mad,
That turns the wise back, and makes their knowledge folly.
That confirms the word of His servant, and fulfils the counsel of His messenger.
That says to Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be inhabited! And to the cities of Judah,
Ye shall be built! Yea, your ruins shall be restored!"

That says to the deep, "Be dry! And thy streams will I dry up!"
That says to Cyrus, "Thou art My Shepherd! He will perform all My purpose.
He will say to Jerusalem, 'Thou shalt be built!'
And to the Temple, 'Let it be founded!'"

(Ch. xliv. 21-28.)

## CHAPTER II.

### Cyrus and the Overthrow of Babylon.

**The work of Cyrus described.**

Thus saith Jehovah to His anointed, to **Cyrus**, whose right hand I hold;
That I may cast down nations before him, and loose the loins of kings;
That I may open doors before him, and that gates may not be shut.
"I will go before thee! I will make the rough places plain!
I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron,
I will give thee treasures of darkness, and the stores of secret places,
That thou mayest know that I Jehovah, the God of Israel, call thee by thy name.
For the sake of Jacob My servant! For Israel, My chosen one!
I have called thee by thy name; I sought thee when thou knewest Me not!
I am Jehovah, and there is none else! Beside Me there is no God!

I equipped thee, when thou knewest Me not,
That they may know from the East, and from the West,
That there is none beside Me—I am Jehovah, and there is none else.
I form the light, and create darkness! I make peace,
And create trouble! I Jehovah am He who maketh all these things!" (Ch. xlv. 1-7.)

**A call to preparation.**

Drop ye heavens from above! Let the skies pour down righteousness!
Let the earth open, and bring forth deliverance!
Let righteousness spring up together! I Jehovah make all these things!
Woe to him that striveth with his Maker—an earthen vessel among earthen vessels!
Will the clay say to him that formeth it, What makest thou?
Will thy work say, He hath no hands!
Woe to him who saith to his father, What begettest thou?
And to his mother, What bearest thou?
Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, even his Maker:—
(Ask me concerning the future! Concerning My sons, and the work of My hand command ye Me!)
I have made the earth, and I have created man upon it;
With My own hand have I stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I appointed!
I have raised him up in righteousness, and will make all his ways smooth;
He will build My city! He will let go My captive people!
And that without price, or reward, saith Jehovah of Hosts!
(Ch. xlv. 8-13.)

**The recognition of Israel's God.**

Thus saith Jehovah :—The produce of Egypt,
The profit of Ethiopia, and of the **Sabæans**, men of high stature—
Shall come over to thee ; and they shall be thine ;
They shall come after thee ; in chains they shall pass over ;
They shall fall down unto thee—they shall pray to thee,
" Surely God is in thee ! And there is none else—no other God !
Verily thou art a God of mystery ! Thou God of Israel, the Saviour ! "
They are ashamed ! They are confounded ! Every one of them !
They go together in confusion—those who cast images !
Israel hath in Jehovah an everlasting salvation ;
Ye shall not be ashamed, or confounded world without end !
For thus saith Jehovah, He who hath created the heavens—
He who formed the earth, and made it ! He hath established it ;
He created it not for an empty thing ; He formed it to be inhabited ;
I am Jehovah, and there is none else.
I have not spoken in secret ! Not in a place of darkness !
I did not say to the seed of Jacob, Seek Me for no purpose !
I am Jehovah that speaketh the right, that declareth the true.
(Ch. xlv. 14-19.)

**Vanity of the false Gods.**

Assemble together, yea, come ! Draw near, ye escaped of the nations !
They do not understand, who carry the wood of their idol,
Who pray unto a god, that cannot save them !

Make known, and bring it forward! Let them confer together!
Who hath before this declared it? Who hath made it known long ago?
Was it not I, Jehovah? And there is no God beside Me;
A God righteous, and helpful—there is none beside Me.
Look unto Me, and be delivered, all ye ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is none else!
By Myself I have sworn; from My mouth hath gone forth righteousness—a word which shall not return!
"To Me every knee shall bow! Every tongue shall swear!"
"Only in Jehovah," shall they say of Me, "is righteousness and strength.
Yea, to Him shall they come, and be ashamed—who were incensed against Him.
In Jehovah shall they be justified, and glory—all the seed of Israel."
**Bel** boweth down! **Nebo** stoopeth! Their images are on the beasts, and oxen!
Your portable images are carried, a load for the panting beast!
They stoop! They bow down together! They cannot deliver themselves
From being carried—nay, they are themselves carried into captivity! (Ch. xlv. 20—xlvi. 2.)

**The security of trust in Jehovah.**

Hearken to Me, O House of Jacob! Yea, all the remnant of the House of Israel!
Ye who have been carried from your origin, even from your birth.

(And to old age, yea, even to hoary hairs, I am He that carrieth you.
I have made, and I will carry! I will lift up, and I will deliver!)
To whom will ye liken Me? And make me equal?
To whom will ye compare Me, that we may be like?

**A contrast.**

They who lavish gold, and weigh out silver, hire a goldsmith
That he may make a god; they fall down, yea, they worship it.
They carry it upon their shoulders, yea, they lift it up.
They set it in its place, and it standeth; from its place it moves not.
They cry unto it, but it answers not! It saves them not out of trouble.

**The conclusion.**

Remember this, and be men! Lay it to heart, O ye transgressors!
Remember the former things of old! For I am God!
Yea, there is no god—there is not one like Me!
Declaring the end from the beginning, and of old things that have not been!
Saying, "My counsel shall stand—I will do all My purpose."
Calling the **eagle** from the **East**, from a far land the man of My counsel.
Yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed, and I will assuredly perform.
Hearken unto Me, ye stout-hearted, ye who are far from righteousness!
I bring My righteousness near; it shall not be far off!

And My deliverance—it shall not tarry !
Yea, I will place deliverance in Zion—for Israel My glory !
(Ch. xlvi. 3-13.)

**The overthrow of Babylon.**

Down, and sit in the dust, thou virgin daughter of Babylon !
Sit on the ground, without a throne, thou daughter of the Chaldeans !
For no more shalt thou be called, Tender, and Delicate !
Take the mill stones, and grind meal !
Throw back thy veil ! Fasten up thy garments !
Make bare thy leg, and pass through the rivers !
Let thy nakedness be uncovered, let thy shame be seen !
I will take vengeance, and have mercy on none !
Our redeemer—Jehovah of Hosts is His Name, the Holy One of Israel !
Sit in silence ! Get thee into the dark ! Thou daughter of the Chaldeans !
For no more shalt thou be called, The Mistress of Kingdoms !
I was wroth with My people ! I profaned My inheritance, and gave them into thy hand !
Thou didst not pity them ; nay, on old men thou didst lay a heavy burden !
And thou saidst, " I shall be Mistress for ever ! "
Thou didst not consider this—thou didst not bear in mind the result.
Now then, hear this, thou pleasure-seeker, dwelling in careless ease !
Thou art saying in thine heart, " I am, and there is none but me !

I shall never be a widow—never be bereaved of my children!"
Yet these two things shall come upon thee—suddenly, in one day,
Bereavement and widowhood! In full shall they come upon thee,
In spite of thy many enchantments—thy many charms!
Thou puttedst thy trust in thy wrong-doing, saying, "No one seeth."
In thy wisdom, and knowledge—they have misled thee;
So that thou didst say, "I am, and there is none but me."
Therefore a trouble cometh upon thee, which thou shalt not be able to **charm** away;
And a calamity shall befall thee, which thou canst not do away with;
And desolation shall come upon thee, which thou suspectest not!
Stand then with thy charms, and thy many enchantments,
In which thou hast wearied thyself, from thy youth up,
See if thou canst profit, see if thou canst prevail!
Thou art wearied by the multitude of thy counsellors—
Let them stand now, and help thee, planet-mappers, star-gazers,
Who know by the new moons the origins of things!
Behold, they have become as stubble—the fire has burned them!
They do not save themselves from the power of the flame.
There is no coal for warming oneself, no fire to sit before!
Thus are they become to thee, with whom thou hast wearied thyself!

Thy **magicians**—from thy youth up,
Each one wanders away to his own quarter—none help thee! (Ch. xlvii. 1-15.)

**An address to Israel. Unfaithfulness rebuked.**

Hear ye this, O House of Jacob—ye who are called by the name of Israel!
Even ye who have come forth from the waters of Judah—
Ye who swear by the Name of Jehovah, and call upon the God of Israel
(Not in truth, and not in righteousness,
They call themselves of the Holy city, and stay themselves on the God of Israel—
Jehovah of Hosts is His Name).
I have declared the former things long ago, yea I uttered them,
And I showed them! But suddenly I wrought, and they came to pass!
Because I knew that thou wast hard of heart,
That thy neck was an iron sinew, and thy brow brass,
Therefore I declared them to thee long ago; before they happened I showed them to thee.
Lest thou should'st say, "My idol hath done them;
My graven image, and my carved image hath commanded them."
Thou hast heard—look at them as a whole! Should ye not declare them?
I show thee new things from this time—even hidden things,
Which thou knewest nothing of!
They are now created, and not of old. Before to-day thou heardest them not,

Lest thou shouldest say, "Behold! I knew them!"
Neither hast thou heard them, nor known them,
Nor has thine ear listened long ago.
For I knew that thou wast very treacherous,
And wast called a trangressor from thy birth.
(Ch. xlviii. 1-8.)

**The divine reason.**

For My Name's sake I defer Mine anger; and for My glory's sake
I am long suffering towards thee, not to cut thee off.
Behold! I have refined thee, but not just as silver;
I have tested thee in a furnace of affliction.
For Mine own sake, Mine own sake, have I done it!
(For how am I dishonoured!) My glory I will not give to another. (Ch. xlviii. 9-11.)

**Another summons to listen to God. Cyrus spoken of.**

Hearken unto Me, O Jacob! And Israel, My Chosen one!
I am He; I am the first; I also am the last.
My hand also laid the foundation of the earth;
My hand spread out the heavens. I call unto them, they stand up together.
Assemble yourselves, every one, and hear, Who of them foretold these things?
He whom Jehovah loves will carry out His purpose on Babylon,
And execute His might upon the Chaldeans.
I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him,
I have caused him to come, and his way shall be prosperous.

Come near unto Me, and hear ye this
(I have never spoken in secret from the beginning: from the time that anything was, there I was.
And now Jehovah hath sent me, and His Spirit).
Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—
I, Jehovah thy God, who teacheth thee to prosper,
Who leadeth thee in the way thou shouldest go:
Oh that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments!
Then thy peace had been as a river,—thy righteousness as the waters of the sea,
Thy seed also would have been like sand, thine offspring like its grains;
Their name would not have been cut off, nor destroyed from before Me.

**The call to go home.**

Go ye out of Babylon! Flee ye from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing declare ye, make known this,
Cause it to reach the utmost end of the earth—say ye,
"Jehovah hath redeemed His servant Jacob.
And they thirsted not in the deserts through which He led them;
He caused the water to flow out of the rock for them;
He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out—
There is no peace, saith Jehovah, unto the wicked."

(Ch. xlviii. 12-22.)

## CHAPTER III.

### A Peep into the Captivity.

#### Its Religious Lessons.

**An episode in Babylon** (606-595 B.C.).

In the third year of the reign of **Jehoiakim**, king of Judah, came **Nebuchadrezzar**, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. Then Jehovah gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand with part of the **vessels** of the House of God, which he carried into the land of **Shinar** to the house of his god. Now the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the chief eunuch, that he should bring certain of the Children of Israel, and of the royal seed, and of the nobility—persons in whom there was no blemish, but well-formed, and possessed of all wisdom, and clever in knowledge, and well educated, and qualified to stand in the king's palace, that they might teach them the learning, and the language of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the royal table, and of the wine which he drank, that so they might be specially kept for three years, and at the end thereof stand before the king. Now among these there were of the Children of Judah **Daniel**, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, unto whom the chief eunuch gave names, giving unto Daniel the name of **Belteshazzar**; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, **Abednebo**.

**The conduct of Daniel.**

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion from the king's table, nor with the wine which he drank, therefore he requested of the chief

eunuch that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into the favour and kind regard of the chief eunuch, and the chief eunuch said unto Daniel, "I fear my master the king, for he hath appointed your meat, and your drink. And why should he see your faces worse looking than the others in the same position as yourself? In that case ye would endanger my life before the king." Then said Daniel unto the officer whom the chief eunuch had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, yea let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. Then let our faces be looked upon, and the faces of the men that eat of the portion from the royal table, and as thou seest, deal with thy servants." So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. Now at the end of ten days, their faces appeared fairer and fatter than all the others who did eat of the portion from the royal table. Thus the officer took away the portion prescribed for their eating and drinking, and gave them pulse. (Daniel, ch. i. 1-16.)

**His introduction to the King.**

As for these four persons God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, but to Daniel He gave understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days, that the king had appointed, the chief eunuch brought them in before Nebuchadrezzar, and the king conversed with them, and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; they, therefore, stood before the king, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the learned men and astrologers that were in all his realm. Now Daniel con-

tinued in the royal court unto the first year of king **Cyrus** (538 B.C.). (Ch. i. 17-21.)

**The dream and anxiety of Nebuchadrezzar** (595 B.C.).

In the **twelfth** year of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar, he dreamed a dream wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep departed from him. Then the king commanded that they should call the learned men, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers (and the Chaldeans), that they might explain to the king his dream. And the king said unto them, "I have dreamed a dream, and I am much concerned to understand the dream." Then spake the Chaldeans to the king (in **Aramaic**), "O king, live for ever! Tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "This is my decree:—If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill, but if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and payment, and great honour. Therefore show me the dream and the interpretation of it." They answered again, and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation thereof." The king answered, and said, "I am sure that ye are eager for some opportunity, because ye see what my decree is. If then ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you. For ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed; therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof." The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, "There is not a man upon the

earth that can show the king's matter, because no king, lord, or ruler has asked such a thing from a learned man, or astrologer, or Chaldean. Yea, it is a hard thing that the king requireth and there is none other that can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

Therefore the king was angry, and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon should be destroyed. The decree then went forth, that the wise men should be slain, and they sought Daniel and his companions that they might slay them. But Daniel, replied with counsel and wisdom to Arioch, the commander of the executioners who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. He answered and said to Arioch, the king's officer, "Why has this severe decree been issued by the king?" Then Arioch explained the matter to Daniel.

**Daniel's interposition.**

Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his own house, and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that so they might pray to the God of heaven for mercy concerning this secret, that they should not destroy Daniel, and his companions with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision, and Daniel blessed the God of heaven. (Ch. ii. 1-19.)

**A prayer of thanksgiving.**

Daniel answered and said:—

Blessed be the Name of God for ever and ever! Wisdom and might are His!

He fixeth the times and the seasons! He removeth, and setteth up kings!
He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to the understanding!
He revealeth the deep, and secret things! He knoweth what is in darkness!
Yea, the light dwelleth with Him!
I thank and praise Thee, O thou God of my fathers!
Thou hast given me wisdom, and might; thou hast made known to me what we desired.
For thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

**The interpretation promised.**

Daniel then went unto Arioch, whom the king had ordered to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus unto him, "Destroy not the wise men of Babylon. Bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation." Then Arioch brought Daniel in before the king in haste, and spake thus unto him, "I have found a man of the Jewish captives, who will make known unto the king the interpretation." The king answered and said to Daniel (whose name was Belteshazzar), "Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king hath demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the learned men, the soothsayers cannot show unto the king, but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadrezzar what shall be in the coming days. Thy dream and the visions of thy head upon thy bed are these. As for thee, O King, thy thoughts came up when thou wert on thy bed concerning what should come

to pass thereafter, and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me because of any wisdom that I have more than others, but simply that the interpretation might be made known to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thine heart. (Ch. ii. 1-31.)

**The reward and advancement of Daniel.**

Then the king Nebuchadrezzar fell upon his face, and gave honour to Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation, and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, "Of a truth your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou could'st reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

(Ch. ii. 46-49.)

**The new idolatry.**

Nebuchadrezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits; he set it up in the plain of **Dura**, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadrezzar, the king, sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, the governors, the generals, the treasurers, the judges, the lawyers, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image, which Nebuchadrezzar the king had set up. These all came and stood before the image that the king had set up. Then an herald cried aloud

**The royal edict.**

To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages!
At what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp,
Sackbut, **psaltery**, dulcimer, and all kinds of music,
Ye shall fall down, and worship the golden image,
Which Nebuchadrezzar the king hath set up.
And whoso falleth not down, and worshippeth
Shall the same hour be cast into a burning fiery furnace.
(Ch. iii. 1-6.)

**The refusal of the three faithful Jews.**

Therefore at that time when all the people heard the sound of these varied musical instruments they all fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadrezzar the king had set up. Then certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadrezzar, "O king, live for ever! Thou, O king! hast made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of any musical instrument shall fall down and worship the golden image, and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo—these men, O king, have shown no respect to thee—they serve not thy god, nor worship the image which thou hast set up." Then Nebuchadrezzar in rage and fury commanded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo to be brought, and they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadrezzar spake and said unto them, "Is it of set purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo, that ye do not serve my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of music to fall down, and worship

the image which I have made, well; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into a burning fiery furnace, and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadrezzar! We have no need to answer thee in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, then He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy god, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

(Ch. iii. 7-18.)

**Their condemnation and deliverance.**

Then was Nebuchadrezzar filled with anger, and the form of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo. He spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seventimes more than was necessary, and he ordered the strongest men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, and their mantles, and their other garments, and were cast into the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the sparks of the fire slew those men that lifted up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo. And these three men fell down bound into the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadrezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his councillors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said unto the king, "True, O king!" He answered and said, "Lo! I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the look of the fourth is like a son of God."

Then Nebuchadrezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo, ye servants of the most High God, come forth, and come here." Then they came forth out of the midst of the fire. And the satraps, deputies, and governors, and the king's councillors being gathered together saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their cloaks changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them. Then Nebuchadrezzar spake and said:

Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo,
Who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him
And have changed the king's decree, and yielded their bodies
That they might not serve, nor worship any god except their own God.

Therefore I make a decree:

That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss
Against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo,
Shall be cut in pieces, and their houses be made a dunghill
Because there is no other God that can deliver in this way.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednebo in the province of Babylon. (Ch. iii. 19-30.)

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Fall of Nebuchadrezzar, and Overthrow of His Dynasty (570-539 B.C.).

**A royal decree.**

Nebuchadrezzar unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth. Peace be multiplied unto you!

I have thought it right to set forth the signs, and wonders that the High God hath wrought toward me.

How great are His signs! How mighty are His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom! His dominion from age to age!

**The royal experience** (570 B.C.).

I, Nebuchadrezzar was at ease in mine house, and in happiness in my palace. I saw a dream, which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Therefore, I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me that they might make known the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the learned men, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, and I told the dream unto them, but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But, at the last, Daniel whose name is Belteshazzar (according to the name of my god) came in before me. He is a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and before him I told the dream. "O Belteshazzar, master of the learned, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret gives thee trouble, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of my head on my bed."

**The dream.**

I was looking, and behold! a tree in the midst of the earth. And the height thereof was very great. The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof, reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof unto the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair and the fruit thereof great, and on it was meat for all. The beasts of the field found a shade under it, and the birds of the air dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold! a watcher, even an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus; "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the birds from off its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let its portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from being a man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him and let **seven** seasons pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the **watchers** and the demand by the order of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men." This dream I Nebuchadrezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation, for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

(Ch. iv. 1-18.)

**Daniel interprets the dream.**

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar was aston-

ished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake and said, "Let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies! The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, the height of which reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth, the leaves of which were fair, and the fruit thereof great, and in which was meat for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and on the branches of which the birds of the air built their nests—it is thou, O King! that art grown great, and become strong, for thy greatness has increased, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion unto the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, "Hew it down, etc.," this is the interpretation, O King! and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord, the king. They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven seasons pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. And whereas they commanded that the stump of the tree roots should be left, thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the Heavens do rule. Wherefore, O King! let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and redeem thy sins by right doing, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if so there may be a healing of thine error."

(Ch. iv. 19-27.)

**The fulfilment of the dream.**

All this came upon the king Nebuchadrezzar. At the

end of twelve months he was walking in the royal palace at Babylon. The king spake and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?" While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, "O king Nebuchadrezzar, to thee it is spoken—The kingdom is departed from thee! And they shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven seasons shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadrezzar, and he was driven from among men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair was grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws.

**The King's Restoration.**

And at the end of the period I Nebuchadrezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and Whose kingdom is from generation to generation! And all the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing, for He doeth according to His own will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, "what doest Thou?" At the same time my reason returned unto me, and for the glory of my kingdom my majesty and honour returned unto me. Then my councillors and my nobles sought unto me, and I was

established in my kingdom, and excellent greatness was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadrezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of Heaven, all Whose works are truth, and His ways justice, and those who live in pride He is able to humble. (Ch. iv. 28-37.)

**A royal Feast and a divine warning** (539 B.C.).

**Belshazzar** the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded them to bring the golden and silver vessels which his **ancestor** Nebuchadrezzar had brought forth out of the Temple, which was at Jerusalem, that the king, and his princes, and his princesses, and his ladies might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were brought out of the House of God, which was at Jerusalem, and the king, and his princes, and his princesses, and his ladies drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour there came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the royal palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's face was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud that the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers should be brought in. The king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon,

"Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation of it

Shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold
about his neck,
And shall be one of the **three** rulers in the kingdom."

Then came in all the king's wise men, but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation of it. And king Belshazzar was greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed, and his lords were amazed.

**Daniel's introduction.**

The **Queen,** by reason of the words of the king, and his lords came into the banquet hall. The Queen spake and said, "O King, live for ever! Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be sad! There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and in the days of thy grandfather, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods was found in him, and him thy grandsire, the king Nebuchadrezzar, made master of the learned men, astrologers, Chaldeans, soothsayers. Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and the understanding of an interpreter of dreams, and an explainer of hard sayings, and a solver of difficult points were found in Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will give thee the interpretation." Then was Daniel brought in before the king. The king spake and said unto Daniel, "Art thou that Daniel, who art of the Children of Judah, whom my grandfather brought out of Judea? I have even heard of thee that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding, and excellent wisdom is found in thee, and now the wise men, the astrologers have been brought

in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. Now I have heard of thee that thou canst give interpretations and solve difficulties; if then thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed in purple, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and be one of the three rulers of the land." (Ch. v. 1-17.)

**Daniel's exhortation and explanation.**

Then Daniel answered and said unto the king, "Keep thy gifts for thyself, and give thy remuneration to another! Yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known unto him the interpretation. O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadrezzar, thy grandfather, a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour, and because of the majesty that He gave him, all people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he advanced, and whom he would he put down; but when his heart was lifted up, and his mind was hardened to deal proudly, he was made to come down from his royal throne, and they took his glory from him, and he was driven from among the sons of men, and his heart became like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and appointed over it whomsoever He would. And thou, his son Belshazzar! hast not humbled thine heart though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and they have brought

the vessels of His House before thee, and thou, and thy princes, and thy princesses, and thy ladies have drunk wine in them, and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not nor hear nor know, and the God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written,

"**M'ne**, m'ne, t'kel, upharsin."

This is the interpretation of the matter :—

**M'ne**. God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

**T'kel**. Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting.

**P'res**. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with purple, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be one of the three rulers of the land. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and **Darius** the Median took the kingdom, being threescore and two years old. (Ch. v. 17-31.)

**The new government. Daniel tried** (538 B.C.).

It pleased the **king** to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty satraps, who should be over the whole kingdom, and over these, three presidents of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give a report unto them, and that the king should suffer no loss. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and satraps because an

excellent spirit was in him, and the king purposed to set him over the whole kingdom. But the presidents, and satraps sought to find a charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no charge nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any wrongdoing or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the religion of his God." These presidents and satraps therefore came hurriedly to the king and said thus unto him, "Royal sire, live for ever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies, and the satraps, the privy councillors, and the governors have consulted together for the king to establish a statute, and to make a strict interdict that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O King, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians which abideth." Wherefore the king, the chief ruler, signed the writing, and the decree. (Ch. vi. 1-9.)

**The condemnation of Daniel.**

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house. And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he used to do. Then these men rushed to the place, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near and spake before the king concerning the royal decree, "Hast thou not signed a decree that any man that shall ask a petition of any God, or man within thirty days, save of thee, O

King, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "It is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which abideth." Then answered they and said unto the king, "Daniel, who is of the Children of the captivity of Judah regardeth not thee, O King, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day." Then the king, when he heard these words was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. These men again came hurriedly to the king, and said unto the king, "Know, O King, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute, which the king establisheth, may be changed." Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. The king spake and said unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. (Ch. vi. 10-17.)

**The deliverance.**

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting, neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions, and when he came to the den he cried in a very sad voice unto Daniel. The king spake and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Then Daniel said unto the king, "O King, live for ever! My God hath sent His angel,

and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me, and also in regard to thee, O King, have I done no hurt." Then was the king exceedingly glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

**The result.**

And the king commanded, and they brought those men, who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

(Ch. vi. 18-24.)

**The royal decree.**

Then the great King wrote unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth :—

"Peace be multiplied unto you! I make a decree.

In every part of my kingdom, men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

For He is the living God, and steadfast for ever!

His kingdom shall not be destroyed! His dominion is for ever!

He delivereth, and rescueth! He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and on earth!

He it is who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of the Median king, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (Ch. vi. 25-28.)

## CHAPTER V.

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH; HIS CALLING AND FUNCTION.

**The True Israel.**

Hearken, ye distant shores to me! Give ear, ye far-off peoples!
Jehovah hath called me from the womb—from my birth hath he named me.
And He hath made my mouth a sharp sword; He hid me in the hollow of His hand.
He hath made me a polished arrow; in His quiver hath He hid me, He hath said unto me:
"Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
But I said:
"I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain.
Nevertheless my case is with Jehovah, and my reward with my God."
And now saith Jehovah, that formed me from my birth to be His servant
To bring Jacob unto Him, and that Israel may be gathered:
(For I am honoured before Jehovah, and my God was my strength).
Yea, he said:
It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant,
To raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel,
I have set thee for a light to the nations, to be My salvation unto the end of the earth.
Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel—their Holy One;

To him that is despised, abhorred of the people, a servant of tyrants.—
Kings shall see, and arise, princes also shall worship because of Jehovah
The faithful one, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.
Thus saith Jehovah:
In a time of favour have I heard thee; in a day of salvation have I helped thee,
And I preserved thee, and gave thee as a covenant of the people,
To establish the land, to cause the deserted places to be re-occupied;
To say to the prisoners, Go forth! To those in darkness, Come to the light!
They shall feed by the way, and on all the bare hills find pasture.
They shall not hunger, nor thirst; neither mirage nor sun shall hurt them,
For He that hath pity on them shall lead them;
Even by springs of water shall He guide them.
Yea, I will make all My mountains a way, My highways will be made level.
Behold these, from afar they come! Behold those from the north and the south,
And these again—from the land of the **Sinites**.

(Isaiah, ch. xlix. 1-12.)

**A call to joy.**

Sing O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! Break into singing O mountains!
Jehovah hath comforted His people! He will pity His suffering ones!

**Despondency rebuked.**

And yet Zion hath said
Jehovah hath forsaken me! Yea, Jehovah hath forgotten me!
Can a woman forget her sucking child,
So as not to have pity on her own son?
Even though they forget, yet will I not forget thee!
Behold! I have graven thee on the palms of My hands;
Thy walls are continually before Me!
Thy builders hasten! Those that destroyed thee
And that made thee a ruin shall go forth from thee!
Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold;
All these gather themselves together—they come to thee.
Assuredly, saith Jehovah, thou shalt adorn thyself with them,
Thou shalt put them on thee, as a bride doeth!
For thy ruins, and desolate places, and wasted land,
Yea, they shall be too small for the inhabitants;
And they who swallowed thee up shall be far away.
Again shall the sons born to thee in thy sorrow say in thine ears,
The place is too small for me; give me room to dwell in!
Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these?
Seeing that I am childless, and barren, an exile, and an outcast!
And who hath brought up these?
Behold! I was left alone—these, where were they?

**A divine summons.**

Thus saith Jehovah:
Behold! I lift up My hand to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples!

So that they may bring thy sons in their arms,
And carry thy daughters upon their side.
And kings shall be thy nursing fathers—their queens thy nursing mothers!
They shall bow down to thee with their face to the ground;
Yea, the dust of thy feet—they shall lick.
Then thou shalt know that I am Jehovah,
For they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.

**A great question with its answer.**

Can the prey be taken from the mighty? Can the captives of the terrible escape?
Thus saith Jehovah:
Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken! Yea, the captives of the terrible shall escape!
For I will contend with him that contendeth with thee;
And I will save thy children.
Yea, I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh,
And with their own blood, as with new wine shall they be drunk.
Then shall all flesh know that I, Jehovah, am thy deliverer,
That thy redeemer is the mighty One of Jacob!

(Ch. xlix. 13-26.)

**God's people not cast off.**

Thus saith Jehovah:
Where is the bill of divorce, with which I have sent your mother away?
Or to what creditor have I sold you?
Behold! For your iniquities were ye sold;
And for your rebellions was your mother put away.
Why, when I come, is there no one? Why, when I call, is there no answer?

Is My hand so short that it cannot redeem? Have I no power to deliver?
Behold! At My rebuke the sea is dried up—the rivers are made a wilderness;
Their fish stinketh, because there is no water—they die of thirst.
I clothe the heavens with darkness, yea, sackcloth I make their covering.

**The prophet's preparation.**

Jehovah hath given me the tongue of a disciple,
That I may know how to comfort the weary.
He wakeneth morning by morning—He wakeneth my ear to hear as a disciple.
Jehovah hath opened my ear, and I have not been rebellious—
I did not turn back!
I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who plucked out the hair;
I hid not my face from insult and spitting.
For Jehovah will help me, therefore I was not confounded;
Therefore have I made my face as flint, and knew I would not be put to shame.
My vindicator is near! Who will contend with me?
Let us draw near together!
Who is my opponent? Let him draw near to me!
Behold! Jehovah helps me—who will condemn me?
Behold! They all decay like a garment—the moth eats them up. (Ch. l. 1-9.)

**A divine appeal.**

Who is there among you that feareth Jehovah—that hears the voice of His servants?

Who is there that walketh in darkness, and hath no light—
Let him trust in the Name of Jehovah, and rest upon his God.
Behold! All ye that kindle a fire, and light your torches,
Go into the flame of your fire, and under the torches ye have lit.
This is what ye shall have from Me—"In sorrow shall ye lie down."
Hearken unto Me! Ye that follow the right—ye that seek Jehovah!
Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn! To the hole of the pit, whence ye are dug!
Look unto Abraham your father, and Sarah your mother;
How I called him when alone—how I blessed, and increased him.
For Jehovah comforteth Zion—He comforteth all her waste places!
He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like a garden of Jehovah.
Joy and gladness will be found therein—songs of praise, and loud melody.
Hearken unto Me, My people! O My nation, give ear unto Me!
(For **teaching** cometh from Me, and I will set up My religion for a light to the peoples.)
My justice is near! My salvation goeth forth! Mine arms will judge the peoples!
The sea-coasts shall wait upon Me, and on My arms shall they trust.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath!

For the heavens shall vanish like smoke—the earth shall decay as a garment,
And its inhabitants shall perish like a mere nothing!
But My salvation shall be for ever—My righteousness shall not fail!
Hearken unto Me, ye that know the right—ye people in whose heart is My teaching.
Fear not the reproach of men! Be not afraid of their revilings!
For as a garment shall the moth eat them—as wool will the insect eat them!
But My righteousness shall be for ever—My salvation to all generations. (Ch. l. 10-li. 8.)

**Three calls to awake.**

**(1.) Addressed to God.**

Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, thou arm of Jehovah!
Awake! As in days of old—as in former times!
Was it not thou that didst hew **Rahab** in pieces? That didst pierce the dragon?
Was it not thou that didst dry up the sea—the waters of the great deep?
That madest the depths a way for Thy ransomed to pass over?
*(Yea, the redeemed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.

*V. 11. Quoted from Ch. xxxv. 10.

They shall have joy and gladness—sorrow and crying shall be gone!)
I, even I, am He that comforteth you! Who art thou to be afraid
Of man that is mortal,—of the son of man who is as grass?
That thou forgettest Jehovah thy Creator, who stretched out the heavens
And founded the earth?
That thou art trembling every day at the fury of the oppressor
As he prepares to destroy? Ah! where is the wrath of the oppressor?
Soon will the crushed be set free! He shall not go down to the grave!
His bread shall not fail him!
As truly as I Jehovah am thy God, who terrifieth the sea,
So that its waves roar! Jehovah of hosts is His name!
I have put My words into thy mouth, and hid thee in the shadow of My hand,
To plant the heavens, and to found the earth, and to say unto Zion, "Thou art My people." (Ch. li. 9-16.)

(2.) **The second call addressed to Jerusalem.**

Awake! Awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem!
Thou that hast drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of His fury!
The full cup of reeling hast thou drunk, and wrung out!
Not one is there to guide her of all the sons she has had;
Not one taketh her by the hand of all the sons she has brought up!
These two things are come upon thee—who pitieth thee?

Desolation with destruction, and famine with war—who comforteth thee?
Thy sons have fainted—they lie at all the street corners, as a hart in a net;
They are filled with the fury of Jehovah—the rebuke of thy God!
Therefore hear now this thou afflicted one—drunken but not with wine!
Thus saith Jehovah, thy Jehovah—thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people.
Behold! I take out of thine hand the cup of reeling—the full cup of My fury,
Thou shalt no more drink it again!
And I put it into the hand of them that afflicted thee,
Who said unto thee, "Bow down that we may go over!"
And thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as a street for men to pass over. (Ch. li. 17-23.)

(3.) **Third call addressed to Zion.**

Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion!
Put on thy beautiful garments, O thou Jerusalem, the Holy city!
For never more shall the uncircumcised, and the unclean enter thee!
Shake thyself from the dust! Arise! Take thy seat, O Jerusalem!
Loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck thou captive daughter of Zion!
For thus saith Jehovah:
Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and not with silver shall ye be redeemed.

For thus saith Jehovah:
My people went down aforetime to Egypt, to sojourn there;
And **Assyria** oppressed them without cause.
Yet now, what have I here, saith Jehovah, "My people taken away for nought!"
They that rule over them exult, saith Jehovah;
And My Name continually every day is blasphemed.
Therefore My people shall know My Name;
Therefore on that day they shall know that it is I that saith, "Here am I!" (Ch. lii. 1-6.)

**A vision of Restoration.**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that announceth peace!
That bringeth good tidings of good—that publisheth salvation!
That saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
Hark! Thy watchmen have called out; they rejoice together,
For they see, eye to eye, Jehovah returning to Zion!
Break forth into joy! Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem!
Jehovah comforts His people! He redeems Jerusalem!
Jehovah maketh bare His holy arm before all nations;
All the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God.

**A call to go out.**

Depart ye! Depart ye! Go ye out thence! Touch not the unclean!
Go ye out of her midst! Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of Jehovah!

For ye shall not go out in haste, nor shall ye go in flight;
Jehovah shall go before you—the God of Israel shall bring up the rear! (Ch. lii. 7-12.)

### Zion's bright future.

**The joy of deliverance.**

Sing out, O barren, thou that didst not bear!
Break forth into singing, and shout aloud, thou that didst not travail!
For more are the children of the desolate, than of the married woman, saith Jehovah.

**A call for more room.**

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the nations, and make the desolated cities to be inhabited.

**Divine Comfort.**

Fear not! For thou shalt not be ashamed!
Be not confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame!
For thou shall forget the shame of thy youth;
Thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more,
For thy Maker is thy husband—Jehovah of Hosts is His name.
And thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth is He called.
For as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, Jehovah calleth thee back

As a wife of youth, when cast off for a time, saith thy God!
For a small moment have I forsaken thee!
But in great compassion will I take thee back again!
In a burst of wrath I hid My face from thee—for a moment!
But with everlasting kindness will I have pity on thee, saith thy redeemer Jehovah! (Ch. liv. 1-8.)

**The covenant promise.**

For this is now as it was in the case of Noah's flood.
As I swore that the waters of Noah should no more cover the earth,
So I swear that I will not be wroth with thee, and rebuke thee!
Although the mountains depart, and the hills be removed,
My favour will not depart from thee! My covenant of peace—
It shall not move from thee! saith Jehovah, who pities thee.

**The divine Purpose.**

O thou afflicted, tempest tossed, without comfort!
Behold! I lay thy stones with **colour** and thy foundations with sapphires!
I will make thy battlements of rubies—thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy boundaries of precious stones.
All thy children shall be taught of Jehovah,
And great shall be the peace of thy children.
By righteousness shalt thou be established;
Thou shalt be far from anxiety, for thou shalt have no fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come near thee.
Behold! Should any gather against thee, it will not be My doing.

Whosoever riseth against thee shall fall on account of thee.
Behold! I have created the smith, that bloweth the fire,
And that produceth an instrument as his work;
And I have created the destroyer to destroy.
No weapon formed against thee shall prosper;
Every tongue that speaketh against thee, shalt thou condemn.
This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah;
And their righteousness is of him, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. liv. 9-17.)

### The Suffering Servant.

(1.) **His ultimate triumph.**

Behold! My servant shall be crowned with success!
He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high!
Just as many were astonished at thee—so disfigured!
(His face was not like that of man, nor his form as the children of men!)
So will he startle many nations, kings will shut their mouths at him,
For what they had never been told, they see;
And what they had never heard, they perceive.

(2.) **The amazement of men.**

Who believed what we heard? To whom was the arm of Jehovah revealed?
For he grew up as a shoot before us, as a sprout out of dry ground.
He had no form nor beauty, that we should behold him!
He had no comeliness, that we should desire him!
He was despised, and rejected of men! A man of sorrows and acquaint with disease!

As one from whom men hide their face—despised, and we
esteemed him not!

(3.) **The reason of the suffering.**

Surely, he bore our sicknesses, yea, our griefs he carried,
While we thought him one stricken, smitten of God, and
afflicted,
But he was wounded for our sins, bruised for our iniquities;
He suffered to secure our peace; by his stripes we are
healed.
We all went astray like sheep, each turned their own way,
But Jehovah made our guilt to fall on him.

(4.) **Patience under cruel treatment.**

Oppressed, yet he humbled himself, and opened not his
mouth,
As the lamb led to the slaughter—as a ewe dumb before
her shearers;
And he opened not his mouth!
Through oppression and false judgment he was taken away!
And of his contemporaries, who considered
That he was cut off out of the land of the living,
That for the transgression of My people he was stricken?
And his grave was made with the wicked—his tomb with
the **evil-doer**,
Although he had done no violence, though no deceit was
in his mouth!

(5.) **The doing of Jehovah.**

Yea, it was Jehovah's will to smite him; He made him
suffer.
If he made his soul an offering for guilt, he should see his
seed,

He should have length of days, and Jehovah's pleasure would prosper in his hand.
After the travail of his soul he would see with satisfaction.
By his knowledge would My righteous servant justify many,
And bear their iniquities.
Therefore will I cause him to share with the great,
And with the strong will he divide the spoil,
Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors;
While he bare the sins of many, and interceded for transgressors. (Ch. lii. 13-liii. 12.)

## CHAPTER VI.

### Prophecies setting forth the Freeness and Fulness of the Divine Provision.

**A gracious invitation.**

Ho! All ye that are thirsty—come ye to the water!
And ye that have no money, come ye, buy and eat!
Yea, come, buy without money, and without price, wine and milk!
Why do ye spend money for what is not bread, and your earnings for what satisfies not?
Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good!
Yea, let yourselves delight in plenty!
Incline your ear, and come unto Me! Hear, and ye shall live!
For I make an everlasting **covenant** with you—
The loving-kindnesses promised to David—unfailing!
Behold! I gave him for a witness to the nations,
As a prince and commander to the nations.

Behold! people that thou knowest not shalt thou call!
And people, that knew thee not, shall run unto thee!
Because of Jehovah, thy God! Because of the Holy One of Israel;
For He hath glorified thee!

Seek ye Jehovah, while He may be found! Call ye upon Him while He is near!
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts;
Yea, let him turn unto Jehovah, for He will have mercy upon him,
And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.
For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are My ways your ways, saith Jehovah.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Ch. lv. 1-9.)

**The God of creation the God of grace.**

As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven
And returneth not thither,
But watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,
And giveth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater,
So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish My will,
And it shall prosperously carry out that for which I sent it.
For with joy shall ye go out! With peace shall ye be led forth!
The mountains, and hills shall break forth before you into singing,
Yea, all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree!

Instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle !
It shall be to Jehovah for a name,
For an everlasting sign, which shall not be cut off.
(Ch. lv. 10-13.)

**A warning against Jewish exclusiveness.**

Thus saith Jehovah :—Keep ye justice, and do the right.
For My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be seen !
Blessed is the man that acts thus—the son of man that stands by this !
That keeps the Sabbath so as not to profane it,
And that keeps his hand away from doing any evil.
Let not the stranger who hath joined himself to Jehovah speak,
Saying, " Jehovah will utterly separate me from His people."
Neither let the eunuch say : " Behold ! I am a dry tree ! "
For thus saith Jehovah unto the **Eunuchs** :
"They that keep My **Sabbaths**, and choose what I delight in,
And that adhere to My covenant—
To them I give in My House, and within My walls a place,
And a name better than that of sons and daughters,
I give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."
And to the stranger, who join themselves to Jehovah to serve Him,
Even to love the Name of Jehovah, and to be His servants :—
" Every one that keepeth the Sabbath, so as not to profane it
And standeth firmly by My covenant,
Them do I bring to My holy mountain and make glad in My House of prayer ;
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on Mine altar,

For My House will be called a House of prayer for all nations."

Thus saith Jehovah, who gathereth the dispersed of Israel:
"I will yet gather others to those which have been gathered to him." (Ch. lvi. 1-8.)

**An older oracle. A lamentation.**

All ye wild beasts of the field, come hither to eat! All ye beasts of the forest!
His watchmen are blind! They have no discernment!
They are all dumb dogs that cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving slumber!
Yea, they are greedy dogs—they are never satisfied!
And they are shepherds, that cannot understand.
They all look to their own way, each one for his own profit, every one of them!
"Come! I will fetch wine! Yea, let us fill ourselves with strong drink!
And let to-morrow be as to-day,—much more abundant!"
The righteous perisheth, while no man layeth it to heart;
And good men are taken away—none considering
That the righteous man is taken away from coming evil.
That he enters into peace, and rests in his bed—
Every one who walked in his own uprightness.

**The sins of which Israel was guilty.**

But come hither! Ye sons of the sorceress! Ye seed of adultery and whoredom!
Over whom do you make merry? Over whom do you make wide the mouth,
And stretch out the tongue?
Are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood?

Ye who inflame yourselves by the terebinths, under every green tree!
Who slay the children in the **valleys**, under the cleft rocks!
By the smooth **stones** of the valley is thy portion—they, they are thy lot!
To them hast thou poured out a drink offering—thou hast given them a meal offering!
Could I remain contented in regard to those things?
Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set up thy bed,
Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.
Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy sign,
For thou hast been familiar with others than Me, and art gone up!
Thou hast enlarged thy bed; thou hast covenanted with them;
Thou hast loved their bed; thou hast become **impure**.
Thou hast gone to **Moloch** with oil, and hast increased thy perfumes!
Thou hast sent thy messengers afar, and debased thyself to Sheol!
Thou art wearied with thy journeying, yet saidst not, There is no hope!
Thou renewedst thy strength, therefore thou didst feel no grief!
And of whom hast thou been afraid, and in fear that thou hast lied,
And didst not remember Me, and lay it to heart?

(Ch. lvi. 9-lvii. 11.)

**Jehovah now begins to work.**

Have not I held My peace for a long time, and thou fearest Me not?

I will make known My righteousness! As for thy works,
they shall not profit thee.
When thou criest, let thy idols deliver thee!
Ah! a wind carries them all away—a breath takes them away!
But he that trusteth in Me shall possess the land,
He shall inherit My holy mountain: and shall say
"Cast up, cast up, prepare the way:
Take up the stumbling block out of the way of My people."

**A divine assurance.**

For thus saith Jehovah, the high and lofty one, that
inhabiteth eternity,
Whose name is Holy!
I dwell in the high and lofty place, yet with the contrite and
humble,
To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart
of the contrite!
For I do not contend for ever, neither am I angry for ever,
For the spirit would fade away before Me, and the souls
that I have made.
For the guilt of his covetousness I was wroth, and smote him;
I hid Myself, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in
the way of his own heart;
I have seen his ways; I will heal and lead him;
Yea, I will restore comfort to him, and his mourning ones.
I am He that createth the fruit of the lips:—Saith Jehovah,
"Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is
near, and I will heal him."
But the wicked are as the troubled sea!
It cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt.
There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

(Ch. lvii. 12-21.)

**Condemnation of hypocrisy.**

Cry aloud! Do not spare thyself! Lift up thy voice like
a trumpet;
Yea, show My people their transgression, and the House of
Jacob their sins!
But they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways,
As a nation, which hath done righteousness, and not
forsaken the law of their God.
They ask of Me judgments of righteousness, and they
delight in the approach of God.

**The complaint.**

"Wherefore do we fast, and Thou seest not—afflict
ourselves, and Thou knowest it not?"

**The answer.**

"Behold! on the day of your fast, you carry on your
business, and oppress your labourers!
Behold! you fast for strife, and contention, and to smite
with a fist of wickedness;
You do not fast to-day so as to make your voice to be
heard on high.
Can this be such a fast as I have chosen—a day when a
man afflicts his soul?
To bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread sack-
cloth and ashes under him;
Dost thou call this a fast, and a day acceptable to
Jehovah?
Is not this the fast that I have chosen—
To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy
burdens,
To let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not this—
To break thy bread to the hungry, and bring home the wretched homeless ones?
When thou seest the naked, that thou shouldest cover him;
And that thou shouldest not turn away thyself from thine own folk? (Ch. lviii. 1-7.)

**(1.) Promises to a true people.**

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning! Thy healing shall spring forth speedily!
Thy righteousness shall go before thee—the glory of Jehovah shall follow thee!
Then thou shalt call, and Jehovah will answer;
Thou shalt cry for help, and He will say, Here am I!

**(2). Promise second.**

If thou take away from thy midst the yoke of oppression,
The putting forth of the finger, and the speaking of wickedness;
If thou give of thy food to the hungry, and satisfy the bowed down—
Then thy light shall rise in the darkness, and thy darkness be as the noon.
Then shall Jehovah guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought;
He shall make thy bones strong; yea, thou shalt be as a watered garden,
And like a springing fountain, whose waters fail not.
Then thy people shall build the old ruins;
Thou shalt raise up the foundations of past generations;

And thou shalt be called a repairer of the breaches, a restorer of paths to dwell in.

(3.) **Promise third.**

If thou hold back thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy work on My holy day;
And call the Sabbath a delight, that which is holy to Jehovah honourable
And honour it, not doing thine own ways,
Not carrying on thine own business, and speaking words;
Then shalt thou have delight in Jehovah;
And I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth;
And make thee enjoy the heritage of Jacob thy father:
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken.

(Ch. lviii. 8-14.)

**Objections replied to.**

Behold! Jehovah's hand is not too short to deliver!
Nor is His ear too heavy to hear!

**The state of abounding sin.**

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God;
And your sins have hid His Face from you, so that He does not hear.
For your hands are defiled with blood, your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips speak falsehood, your tongue murmurs wickedness.
Not one speaketh truly! Not one pleadeth his case honestly!
They trust in vanity, and speak falsely; they conceive trouble, and bring forth ruin.
They hatch basilisks' eggs, and they weave spiders' webs:

Whoso eateth of their eggs, dieth! If one of them is broken, it becometh a viper!

Their webs are of no use for clothing! And men cannot cover themselves with their works!

Their works are works of mischief, and the doing of wrong is in their hands!

Their feet run to evil! They make haste to shed innocent blood!

Their thoughts are thoughts of wickedness! Wasting and destruction are in their ways!

The way of peace they know not! There is no justice in their paths!

They make their ways crooked! Whoso goeth therein has no peace! (Ch. lix. 1-8.)

**The judgment upon all this.**

Therefore hath justice been far from us! Righteousness overtakes us not!

We wait for light, but lo! darkness; for clear light, but lo! we walk in thick darkness!

We grope at the wall like the blind—we grope as if we had no eyes!

We stumble at noon as in the night—as dead men among the living!

We all roar like bears, and mourn sore like doves;

We look for justice, and there is none! For deliverance and it is far from us.

For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee! Our sins testify against us!

For our transgressions are with us, and our iniquities—we know them!

Unfaithfulness and denial of Jehovah—departure from the way of our God;
Speaking oppression, and untruth; conceiving and uttering lying words out of our heart.
Right is pushed to one side—public justice standeth afar off!
For truth has stumbled in the street, and equity cannot enter!
Yea, truth is missed, and he who gives up evil-doing is punished. (Ch. lix. 9-15.)

**The divine intervention.**

And Jehovah saw, and He was displeased that there was no justice.
He saw that there was no one—He wondered there was none to interpose—
Then His own arm brought help to Him, and His righteousness, it sustained Him.
And He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on His head.
Yea, He put on garments of vengeance as clothing! He was clad with zeal as a cloak!
According to their deeds, in like manner He will repay—
Burning anger to His adversaries, recompence to His enemies;
To the coastlands He will repay recompence.
That they may fear Jehovah's Name from the west,
And His glory from the rising of the sun.
For He shall come like a rushing stream, which the breath of Jehovah drives along!
And as a Redeemer shall He come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah.
As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, saith Jehovah:—

My Spirit which is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth,
They shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth, and for ever. (Ch. lix. 15-21.)

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Glories of Restored Zion.

**A note of hope.**

Arise! Shine! For thy light hath come—the Glory of Jehovah hath arisen upon thee!
For behold! darkness covers the earth! Deep darkness the peoples!
But Jehovah ariseth upon thee—His glory will be seen upon thee!
And the nations come to thy light, yea, kings to the brightness of thy rays.
Lift up thine eyes round about and see! They all assemble together! They come to thee!
Thy sons come from afar, and thy daughters are carried upon their sides!

**Zion's joy.**

Then thou shalt see, and be glad! Thy heart shall throb, and be enlarged!
For the abundance of the sea shall turn itself to thee, the wealth of the nations comes unto thee!

The multitude of camels covers thee, the dromedaries of **Midian** and **Ephah**!
They all come from **Sheba**—they bring gold and incense;
And they shall show forth the praises of Jehovah!
All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee —the rams of **Nebaioth** shall serve thee!
They shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar! I will glorify the House of My glory!
"Who are these that fly hither as a cloud, and like doves to their windows?"
Truly the sea-coasts wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first
To bring thy sons from afar, their silver, and their gold with them,
To the Name of Jehovah thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel,
Because He hath glorified thee! (Ch. lx. 1-9.)

**The co-operation of the nations.**

And strangers shall build thy walls; their kings shall serve thee!
For in My wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I pitied thee.
Thy gates shall stand open continually, they shall not be shut day or night
That men may bring unto thee the treasures of the nations, and their kings in triumph.
For the nation and kingdom that shall not serve thee shall perish,
Yea, the nations shall be utterly destroyed!
The glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, cypress, plane and sherbin

That I may glorify the place of My sanctuary, and make the place of My feet glorious!
The sons of those that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee;
Those that despised thee shall do homage at the soles of thy feet:
And they shall call thee, "The city of Jehovah,"
"The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

**Abounding prosperity.**

Instead of being forsaken and hated, with no one passing through thee,
I will make thee an everlasting splendour, the joy of many generations;
Thou shalt suck the milk of the nations, yea, also the breast of kings,
And know that I am Jehovah, thy Saviour, and Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob.
For brass I will bring gold; and for iron I will bring silver;
And for wood, brass; and for stones, iron.
I will make thy judges peace, and thy officers righteousness.
Violence will no more be heard in thy land: wasting nor destruction in thy borders.
And thou shalt call thy walls "salvation," and thy gates "praise." (Ch. lx. 10-18.)

**A true City of God.**

The sun shall be no more thy light by day! Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee!
But Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.
No more shall thy sun go down, nor thy moon disappear,

For Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and thy days of mourning shall be over.

Then thy citizens shall be all righteous ; they shall inherit the land for ever.

The sprout of My planting—the work of My hands for My glory.

The least shall become a thousand—the smallest a great nation ;

I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time. (Ch. lx. 19-22.)

**A prophetic declaration.**

The Spirit of Jehovah is upon me ! For Jehovah hath anointed me

To proclaim glad news to the afflicted !

He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted !

To proclaim liberty to the captives, **eye-opening** to the blind !

To proclaim an acceptable year of Jehovah, and a day of vengeance from God !

To comfort all that mourn !

To set upon the mourners in Zion,—to give them a crown in place of ashes,

The oil of joy instead of mourning, beautiful robes instead of despair,

That they may be called, " Terebinths of righteousness,"

The planting of Jehovah that He may be glorified !

**The future of God's people.**

Then shall they build up the old wastes, and raise up the places long desolatè ;

They shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of previous days.

And strangers shall stand, and feed your flocks ;

The sons of the stranger shall be your plowmen, and vine dressers ;

But ye shall be named, "the Priests of Jehovah;"
Ye shall be called, "the Servants of our God."
Ye shall eat the rich produce of the nations!
And in their glorious things shall ye boast yourselves!
Instead of reproach ye shall have double; and instead of disgrace they shall exult in their portion!
For in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them.
For I Jehovah love the right; I hate robbery with wrong doing;
I give them their reward in truth, and make an everlasting covenant with them,
That their seed may be known among the nations, their offspring among the peoples,
All that see them shall recognise them as a seed blessed of Jehovah. (Ch. lxi. 1-9.)

**The Prophet's deep joy.**

I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah! I will be joyful in my God!
For He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.
He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness!
As a bridegroom putteth on his priestly coronet;
As a bride putteth on her jewels!
For as the earth which brings forth its sprouts—as the garden, which causeth what is sown in it to spring forth;
So doth Jehovah cause righteousness, and praise to spring forth before all nations.
For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace! For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest!
Until her righteousness shine forth brightly, and her salvation as a burning torch,

That the nations may see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory!

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.

Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah;

Yea, a royal diadem in the open hand of thy God.

No more shalt thou be called, "Forsaken," nor thy land termed "Desolate."

But thou shalt be called "Delightful," and thy land "Married."

For Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so thy sons marry thee;

As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so thy God rejoiceth over thee! (Ch. lxi. 10-lxii. 5.)

**A divine instruction.**

Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen—they are silent neither day nor night!

Ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, keep not silence!

Give Him no rest till He establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!

**The divine Purpose.**

Jehovah hath sworn by His right hand, and by His mighty arm,

"Surely I will never more give thy corn to be meat for thy enemies;

The sons of the stranger shall not drink the wine, that thou hast made;

But they who reaped shall eat, and praise Jehovah:

They, who have gathered it, shall drink it in My holy courts.

**A summons to come out.**

Out! out through the gates! Prepare the way of the people!
Cast up! cast up the high way! Gather out the stones!
Lift up a standard for the peoples!
Behold! Jehovah hath published to the ends of the earth,
"Say ye to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold! Thy salvation cometh!'"
Behold! His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him,
And they shall call them—
"The Holy people:" "the Redeemed of Jehovah."
And thou shalt be called
"Sought out." "A city not forsaken."

(Ch. lxii. 6-12.)

**Jehovah's victory over Edom.**

"Who is this that cometh from **Edom**? With blood-stained garments from **Bozrah**?
"This one—glorious in his apparel, displaying himself in his great might?"
"It is I that speak in righteousness, mighty to deliver."
"Wherefore art thou stained in thy apparel—thy garments as one that treadeth the winefat?"
"I have trodden the wine-press alone! Of the peoples there was none with Me.
I have trodden them in Mine anger! I have trampled them in My fury!
Their blood besprinkled My garments! I have stained all My raiment!
For the day of vengeance was in Mine heart! The year of My redeemed had come!
And I looked around, but there was none to help!

And I was stupefied, but there was no supporter!
Therefore Mine own arm wrought deliverance for Me;
And My fury—it supported Me.
Yea, I trode down the peoples in Mine anger!
I dashed them in pieces in My fury!
I poured out their life-blood on the ground!"

(Ch. lxiii. 1-6.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Words of Warning on the Eve of Return.

**A rebuke to unbelief.**

I will mention the loving-kindness of Jehovah, the praise-worthy deeds of Jehovah,
According to all that Jehovah hath done for us;
And the great goodness toward the House of Israel, which He showed them,
According to His mercies, and the multitude of His loving-kindness.
He said:—"Surely, they are My people, children that will not lie,"
So He was their Saviour.
In all their affliction He was afflicted; and the angel of His presence saved them.
In His love, and pity He redeemed them:
Yea, He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.
But they rebelled, and grieved His holy Spirit,
Therefore He was turned to be their enemy! He fought against them!
Then **he** * remembered the days of old, saying,

* *I.e.* His people.

"Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the **shepherds** of His flock?
Where is He that put His holy spirit within Him?
He that placed His glorious arm at the right hand of Moses!
Who divided the sea before them—to make His name for ever known!
Who caused them to go through the floods,
As horses through the plains without stumbling;
As the cattle going down unto the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah led them."
So Thou didst lead Thy people to make Thyself a glorious name. (Ch. lxiii. 7-14.)

**A prayer for divine recognition.**

Look down from heaven, and see!—from Thy holy and glorious dwelling-place!
Where is Thy pity, and Thy might? The yearning of Thy love, and Thy compassion?
They are restrained towards me!
For Thou art our Father! Abraham knows us not, and Israel cares not for us,
Thou, Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Thy name.
Why, O Jehovah, dost Thou lead us astray from Thy ways?
Why dost Thou harden our heart, so that we fear Thee not?
Return for the sake of Thy servants—the tribes of Thine inheritance.
They have taken Thy holy hill a little while—our adversaries have trodden down Thy Holy place.
We are become as those over whom Thou didst not rule from of old;

As those who have not been called by Thy name.
Oh! That Thou wouldst rend the heavens! That Thou wouldst come down!
That the mountains might shake at Thy presence!
As fire kindles brushwood! As fire causeth the water to boil!
To make Thy Name known to Thine foes! That the nations may tremble before Thee!
When Thou doest terrible things, such as we expect not:
That Thou wouldst come down—that the mountains might shake before Thee!
For from of old men have not heard, nor have they perceived,
Neither hath the eye seen a God beside Thee, acting for him who waiteth for Him.
Thou meetedst him, who rejoiced to practise righteousness,
When they remembered Thee, in Thy ways.
But Thou art wroth, for we are sinners;
We have been long in this state—we have gone astray!

**A cry of confession.**

We all have become like one that is unclean! All our righteousnesses as an impure thing!
We have all faded away like leaves! And our iniquities—
Like wind have carried us away!
There was none of us who called upon Thy name!
Not one of us roused himself to take hold upon Thee!
For Thou hast hidden Thy Face from us!
Thou hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

**Pardon sought.**

But Thou, Jehovah, art our Father! We are the clay!
Thou art our Potter, and we are all the work of Thy hand!

Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah! Remember not iniquity for ever!
Behold! See! we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people.
Thy Holy **city** is a desolation! Zion is a wilderness!
Jerusalem is in ruins!
Our holy and our beautiful House, where our fathers praised Thee!
It is **burned** up with fire! Yea, all in which we delighted, is laid waste!
Wilt Thou in spite of these things refrain Thyself, O Jehovah?
Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

(Ch. lxiii. 15-lxiv. 12.)

**A divine complaint.**

I was made known to those who asked not for Me! Found by those who sought Me not!
I said, Behold Me! Behold Me! To a nation which called not on My name!
I spread out My hands all the day unto a rebellious people,
Who walked in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts!
A people who provoked Me to My face continually:
Who sacrifice in **gardens**, and burn incense upon the **roofs**;
Who sit among the graves, and spend the night in secret places;
Who eat **swine's** flesh; and broth of unclean things is in their vessels,
Who say "Stop! Come not near to me—I am holy!"—
These are as smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burneth all the day.
Behold! It is recorded before Me—I will not keep silence,
Until I have recompensed, even into their bosoms.

Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together,
Saith Jehovah, in their burning incense upon the mountains,
In their blaspheming Me upon the hills, I recompense,
Yea, I measure their doing first of all into their bosom.
(Ch. lxv. 1-7.)

**A promise of mercy to a remnant.**

Thus saith Jehovah:
As when new wine is found in the cluster, and men say,
"Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."
So will I do for My servants' sake that I may not destroy the whole,
For I will bring forth a seed from Jacob—an heir to My mountains from Judah
And My chosen ones shall inherit them, and My servants shall dwell there.
And **Sharon** shall be a fold of flocks; and the valley of **Achor** a resting-place for cattle,
For My people that have sought for Me.

**The punishment of the rest.**

But ye who are estranged from Jehovah—that forget My holy mountain,
That prepare a table for **Gad**, and offer drink to the goddess **Meni**,
I have destined you for the sword—ye shall all be slain,
For I called, and ye answered not! I spoke, and ye heard not!
And ye did that which was evil in My eyes, and chose what I approved not!
Therefore thus saith Jehovah:
Behold! My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry!
Behold! My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty!

Behold! My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed!
Behold! My servants shall exult for joy of heart,
But ye shall cry out for anguish of heart, and lament for vexation of spirit!
And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto My chosen,
For Jehovah will slay you, and call His servants by another name.
So that whoever blesses himself in the land will bless himself by the God of truth;
And whoever swears in the land will swear by the God of truth,
Because the former troubles are forgotten, and hid from My eyes. (Ch. lxv. 8-16.)

**Jerusalem's bright future.**

For behold! I create a new heavens, and a new earth,
And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
Yea, be ye glad and rejoice for ever for what I create;
For behold! I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy:
And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people:
The voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying,
There shall not be thence any more one dying in infancy, nor an old man who hath not filled his days.
For the young man shall live an hundred years;
Even the sinner, smitten by the curse, shall live an hundred years.
And they shall build houses, and inhabit them;
And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
They shall not build, for another to inhabit;

They shall not plant, for another to eat.
For like the days of a tree are the days of My people,
And My chosen ones shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labour for nothing, nor beget for calamity.
For they are a generation of those blessed of Jehovah,
And their children shall remain to them.
And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer,
And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together;
The lion shall eat straw like the bullock;
And dust shall be the serpent's meat.
They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all My Holy mountain, saith Jehovah. (Ch. lxv. 17-25.)

**The demands of God.**

Thus saith Jehovah:
The heavens are My throne, and the earth is My footstool!
What house will ye build Me? What rest will ye make for Me?
All these things hath My hand made—thus all these things came to be,
Saith Jehovah.
But to that man will I look, even to him that is afflicted,
To him that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.

**Men's evil ways of worship.**

He that killeth an ox does so as if he were killing a man;
He that sacrificeth a lamb does it as if he were strangling a dog;
He that offers a meal-offering does it as if it was swine's blood;

He that burneth incense does it as if he were blessing idols.
As they have chosen their own ways, and delight in abominations,
So I will choose their delusions, and bring their fears upon them
Because I called, and none answered! I spake and none heard!
But they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose what I approved not of.

**An address to the true people.**

Hear ye the Word of Jehovah! Ye that tremble at His Word!
"Your brethen that hate you, that cast you out for My Name's sake
Say, 'Let Jehovah be glorified, that we may behold your joy.'"
But they shall be put to shame.
Hark! Thunder from the city! Hark! From the temple!
Hark! Jehovah rendereth recompense to His foes!
Before she travailed, she brought forth! Before her pains came, she had a man child?
Who hath heard ought like this? Who hath seen such a thing?
Is a land born in a day? Or is a nation begotten in a moment?
For Zion hath travailed, yea, hath brought forth her children.
Should I bring near to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith Jehovah?
Should I who cause to bring forth shut up the womb, saith thy God? (Ch. lxvi. 1-9.)

**A song of exultation.**

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that
love her!
Rejoice with joy for her, all ye that mourn for her!
That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her
consolations;
That ye may drink, and be delighted with the abundance of
glory.
For thus saith Jehovah:
Behold! I will lead peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the nations like a flowing stream, that ye
may drink.
Ye shall ye borne upon the side, and dandled upon the
knees.
As a man whom his mother comforteth,
So will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
And ye shall see, and your heart shall rejoice! Your bones
shall flourish like the young grass;
The Hand of Jehovah shall be recognised by His servants,
And His indignation shall be felt by His enemies.

**The divine vindication.**

For, behold! Jehovah cometh in fire! His chariots are like
a whirlwind!
To render His anger with fury—His rebuke with flames of fire!
For by fire, and by His sword will Jehovah plead with all
flesh;
And the slain of Jehovah shall be many.
They that dedicate, and separate themselves in the **gardens**,
Eating swine's flesh, and abomination, and the field mouse—
These shall be consumed together, saith Jehovah.

(Ch. lxvi. 10-17.)

**Jerusalem the centre of a new worship.**

And as for Me—as for their works, and their thoughts,
The time cometh, when I will gather all nations, and tongues,
And they shall come and see My glory.
I will set a sign among them, and send those that escape to the nations,
To **Tarshish**, **Phut**, and **Lud** that draw the bow,
To **Tubal**, and **Javan**, the coastlands afar off,
Which have not heard My fame, nor seen My glory,
And they shall declare My glory among the nations,
And they shall bring all your brethren, out of all the nations,
As an offering unto Jehovah, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters,
And upon mules, and dromedaries, to My holy mountain,
To Jerusalem, saith Jehovah,
As the Children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the House of Jehovah
And I will take some of them to be **Priests**, and Levites, saith Jehovah.

**Confirmation of the covenant.**

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I create shall remain before Me,
So, saith Jehovah, shall your seed, and your name remain.
And it shall come to pass—From one new moon to another, from one Sabbath to another
All flesh shall come to worship before Me, saith Jehovah.

**The fate of the disobedient. A constant warning.**

**And they** shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that rebelled against Me;

For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be
quenched;
And they shall be an abomination to all flesh.
(Ch. lxvi. 18-24.)

## CHAPTER IX.

### The Royal Edict for Return (538 B.C.). Prophetic Activity Renewed in the Homeland.

Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the **Word** of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and he put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia:
Jehovah, the God of Heaven, hath given me all the
kingdoms of the earth,
And He hath charged me to build Him an House at
Jerusalem, in Judah,
Who is there among you of all His people? His God be
with him,
And let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah,
And build the House of Jehovah, the God of Israel;
(He is the God, who is in Jerusalem,)
And whosoever remaineth in any place, where he sojourneth,
Let the men of his place help him with silver, and with
gold,
With goods and with beasts, beside the free will offering
For the House of God, which is in Jerusalem.

**The people move.**

Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah, and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites—all those whose spirit God had stirred up to go up to build the House of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. (Ezra i. 1-6.)

**Prophetic activity renewed.**

Then ceased the work of the House of God, which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia. Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the Name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, and began to build the House of God, which is at Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God helping them. (Ezra v. 1, 2.)

**The date of Haggai's first message** (520 B.C.)

In the second year of **Darius** the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month came the Word of Jehovah by **Haggai** the prophet unto **Zerubbabel**, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to **Joshua**, the son of Josedech, the High priest, saying:—

**An exhortation to build the Temple.**

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:

"This people say, 'The time is not come, the time that the House of Jehovah should be built!'"

Then came the Word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet, saying:

Is it the time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, and for this House to lie waste? Now, therefore, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,

Deeply consider your ways:—

Ye have sown much, and reaped little; ye eat, and are not satisfied;

Ye drink, and are not filled; ye put on clothes, and none is warm;

Yea, he that earneth wages putteth them into a bag with holes.

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, Deeply consider your ways:

Go up to the mountains, and bring wood, and build the House,

And I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah.

Ye looked for much, and lo! it came to little!

Yea, when ye brought it home, I did blow it away!

Wherefore it is so, saith Jehovah of Hosts?

Because My House lies waste, and every one thinks of his own house!

Therefore the heavens above you have kept back, so that there is no dew;

And the earth hath kept back, so that there is no fruit.

Yea, I have called for a drought on the land, and upon the mountains,

Upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil,

Yea upon all that the ground bringeth forth—

Upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hand. (Haggai i. 1-11.)

**The result of the exhortation.**

Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people gave ear unto the voice of Jehovah, their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as Jehovah their God had sent him, and the people did fear before Jehovah.

**A promise.**

Then spake Haggai the messenger of Jehovah in the message of Jehovah unto the people, saying,

"I am with you, saith Jehovah."

And Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came, and did work in the House of Jehovah of hosts their God in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius, the king. (Ch. i. 12-15.)

**A second message by Haggai.**

In the seventh month on the one and twentieth day of the month came the Word of Jehovah by the prophet Haggai, saying :—

Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High priest, and to the rest of the people, saying :—

"Who is there among you that saw the House in her first glory?

And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison with it as nothing?

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah,

And be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the High priest ;

And be strong, all ye people of the land, and work,
For I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts,
According to the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt,
So My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not!

**A promise for the Second Temple.**

For thus saith Jehovah of hosts:
Yet one little while, and I will shake the heavens,
And the earth; the sea, and the dry land.
Yea, I will shake all nations, and the **wealth** of the nations shall come,
And I will fill this House with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts.
The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith Jehovah of hosts.
The glory of this latter House shall be greater than that of the former,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
And in this place will I put peace, saith Jehovah of hosts.

**The appearance of Zechariah. The eighth month.**

In the eighth month in the second year of Darius came the Word of Jehovah unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying:

**A warning message.**

Jehovah was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, "Turn ye unto Me," saith Jehovah of Hosts, "that I may turn unto you," saith Jehovah of Hosts. Be not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, Turn now from your evil ways and from

your evil doings;" but they heard not, and listened not unto Me, saith Jehovah. Your fathers! Where are they? And the prophets! Will they live for ever? But have not My words, and My decrees, which I commanded My servants the prophets, come upon your fathers? And they turned back, and said, "Just as Jehovah of Hosts has purposed to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our deeds, so hath He dealt with us." (Zech. i. 1-6.)

**Third message of Haggai. The ninth month.**

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius came the Word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:

Ask now the priests for instruction as to this question; "If one bear consecrated flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touch with his skirt bread, or broth, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it become holy?"

And the priests answered and said, "No."

Then Haggai said: "If one that is ceremonially unclean touch any of these things, shall it be unclean?"

And the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

**The application.**

Then answered Haggai, and said:

So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, saith Jehovah; and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer **there** is unclean. And now I pray you consider from this day and up to now from before one stone was laid upon another in the Temple of Jehovah. As often as one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the wine-press to draw out fifty vessels, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting,

and with mildew, and with hail in all the work of your hands—yet ye turned not to Me, saith Jehovah. Consider now from this day, and hitherto, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Temple of Jehovah was laid, consider. Was there then still the seed in the barn? Did the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree bear fruit? From this day will I bless you.

**A special message to Zerubbabel.**

And again the Word of Jehovah came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying:

Speak unto Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying,

I will shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. Yea, I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them, and the horses, and their riders shall come down every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Jehovah, and will make thee as the signet ring, for I have chosen thee, saith Jehovah of Hosts.

(Haggai ii. 10-23.)

## CHAPTER X.

### The Visions of Zechariah.

**The time. The eleventh month.**

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius,

came the Word of Jehovah unto **Zechariah**, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying:

**Vision I. The earth at rest.**

I saw in the night, and behold! a man riding upon a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees, which were in the valley, and behind him there were red, brown, gray, and white horses. And I said, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me said unto me, "I will show thee what these are." And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." And they answered the angel of Jehovah, that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold! the whole earth is quiet and at rest." (Zech. i. 7-11.)

**The application of Vision I.**

Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, "O Jehovah of Hosts! how long hast Thou no mercy on Jerusalem and on the towns of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these seventy years?" Then Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me with good words, words of comfort, so the angel, that talked with me, said unto me, "Cry thou, saying, 'Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; I am deeply interested in Jerusalem and in Zion, and I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at rest; for I was but a little displeased, but they made things worse.' Therefore thus saith Jehovah, 'I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My House shall be built in her, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and a measuring line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts;

My cities shall yet be abundantly prosperous; for Jehovah shall again comfort Zion, and shall again choose Jerusalem.'"
(Ch. i. 12-17.)

**Vision II. The future of the great Empires.**

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold! four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, "What are these?" And he said unto me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." Then Jehovah showed me smiths. Then said I, "What do these come to do?" And He spake, saying, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man lifted up his head, but these are come to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations, which lifted up the horn against the land of Judah to scatter it." (Ch. i. 18-21.)

**Vision III. The future of Jerusalem.**

I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold! a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, "Whither goest thou?" And he said unto me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof." And behold! the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying, 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle therein; for I, saith Jehovah, will be to her a wall of fire round about, yea, I will be the glory in the midst of her.'"
(Ch. ii. 1-5.)

**An appeal to those still in exile.**

Ho! Ho! Yea, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah;

For like the four winds of heaven have I scattered you, saith Jehovah,
Ho! Zion! Deliver thyself, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon!
For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:
For your honour hath He sent me unto the nations, which destroyed you,
For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.
For behold! I shake Mine hand upon them, and they shall become the prey of those that serve them.
And ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me.
Sing aloud and rejoice, O daughter of Zion;
For lo! I come, and I will dwell in thy midst, saith Jehovah.
And many nations shall join themselves unto Jehovah in that day
And shall be a people for Me.
Yea, I will dwell in thy midst, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.
Then Jehovah shall inherit Judah; His portion shall be the holy land,
And He shall choose Jerusalem again.
Be silent, all flesh before Jehovah! He raises Himself up from His Holy Habitation. (Ch. ii. 6-13.)

**Vision IV. The honour and dignity of the High Priest.**

Then He showed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah, and the **accuser** standing at his right hand to accuse him. And Jehovah said unto the accuser, "Jehovah rebuke thee, O thou accuser, even Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee! Is not this man a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. Then he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying: "Take away the filthy garments from him." And unto him he said, "Behold! I cause thine iniquity to pass from thee, and clothe thee in festive robes." He also said, "Let them set a clean mitre upon his head." So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of Jehovah stood by.

**The application.**

Then the angel of Jehovah declared unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: "If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My commandment, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee admission among those that stand by Me. Hear now, O Joshua, the High priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee (for they are witnesses of the sign): 'Behold! I bring forth My servant the branch. For behold the stone that I lay before Joshua—upon this one stone are seven eyes! Behold! I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day.' In that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbour under the vine and the fig tree." (Ch. iii. 1-10.)

**Vision V. The golden candlestick and the olive trees.**

Then the angel that talked with me came again, and wakened me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, "What seest thou?" Then I said, "I have looked, and behold! a candlestick all of gold with a bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lights thereon, and seven

pipes to the seven lights which are upon the top thereof. Also two olive-trees by it, the one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?"

**The Vision explained. Zerubbabel's success declared.**

Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, "Knowest thou not what these be?" And I said, "No, my lord." Then he answered, and spake unto me, saying: "This is the Word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,' saith Jehovah of Hosts. What art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel—a plain. Yea, he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings, 'Grace, grace unto it.'"

**The Temple to be finished.**

Moreover, the Word of Jehovah came unto Me, saying: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you. For they who have despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. Those seven—they are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth." (Ch. iv. 1-10.)

**The two olive trees—what?**

Then answered I and said, What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon its left side? And I answered again, and said unto him, What are these two olive-branches, which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me, and said, "Knowest thou not what these

are?" And I said, "No, my lord." Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth." (Ch. iv. 11-14.)

**Vision VI. The Flying Roll. The necessity of holiness.**

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold! a flying roll. And he said unto me, "What seest thou?" And I answered, "I see a flying roll. The length of it is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits." Then said he unto me: "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one that stealeth is driven out hence like it, and every one that sweareth is driven out hence like it. Yea, I cause it to go forth, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My Name, that it may remain in the midst of his house, and consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof." (Ch. v. 1-4)

**Vision VII. The departing Ephah. Removal of sin.**

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, "Lift up now thine eyes, and see what this is that goeth forth." And I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is an **ephah** * that goeth forth." He said, moreover, "This is the wickedness of the whole land." And behold! there was lifted up a talent of lead, and there was a woman sitting on the middle of the ephah. And he said, "This is wickedness." Then he cast it into the midst of the ephah, and he placed the weight of lead upon the mouth of it. Then I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold! there came out two women and the wind was in their wings; they

* A measure of capacity.

had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens. Then said I unto the angel that talked with me, "Whither do these bear the ephah?" And he said unto me, "To build it an house in the land of **Shinar**, and it shall be established, and set there in its place." (Ch. v. 5-11.)

**Vision VIII. The four chariots. Their divine commission.**

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold! there came four chariots out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot dark red-spotted horses. Then I answered, and said unto the angel that talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" And the angel answered, and said unto me, "These are the four winds of the heavens, which go forth from being before the Lord of the whole earth. (The red horses which are therein go forth to the East); the black horses go forth into the North country; and the white go forth into the West; and the spotted ones go forth toward the South country." Then the red horses went forth, and sought to go that they might walk through the earth, and he said, "Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth." So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then he called me, and spake unto me, saying, "Behold! these that go forth to the North country have left My spirit upon the north country." (Ch. vi. 1-8.)

## CHAPTER XI.

### Zechariah's Closing Words, and Malachi's Message (518-430 B.C.).

**A significant episode.**

Then the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying:

Take those of the Captivity, who have come from Babylon, viz., **Heldai**, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. Then take thou silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them (upon the head of Zerubbabel and) upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High priest, and speak unto him, saying,

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:—

"Behold! the man whose name is the branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of Jehovah, even he shall build the Temple of Jehovah; and he shall have the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and there shall be a priest upon his throne, and the council of peace shall be between them both."

And the crowns shall be for Heldai, and Tobijah, and Jedaiah, and for the kindness of the son of Zephaniah for a memorial in the Temple of Jehovah. And they that are far off shall come and share in the building of the Temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you. Yea, this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of Jehovah, your God.

(Zech. vi. 9-15.)

**A second deputation** (518 B.C.). **Concerning fasts.**

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius that the Word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah in the fourth

day of the ninth month, *i.e.*, Chisleu. It was when **Bethel** had sent Sherezer, and Regemmelech, and their people to pray before Jehovah, and to speak unto the priests which were in the House of Jehovah, and to the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month with fasting, as I have done these so many years?" (Ch. vii. 1-7.)

**The answer.**

Then came the Word of Jehovah of Hosts unto me, saying :—

"Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests thus, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even unto Me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Know ye not the words, which Jehovah hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity, and the towns thereof round about her, when men inhabited the Negeb, and the Shephelah."

**The Divine requirement.**

And the Word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah, saying :—

Thus speaketh Jehovah of Hosts, saying :

"Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his neighbour. And oppress not the widow nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor, and let none of you purpose evil against your neighbour in your heart."

**The disobedience of Israel.**

But they refused to hearken; they pushed forward their shoulder and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yea, they made their heart as adamant, lest they should hear the instruction and the words which Jehovah of Hosts

hath sent by His Spirit through the former prophets, therefore a great wrath came from Jehovah of Hosts. And it is come to pass that as He cried, and they would not hear, "so they cried, and I would not hear," saith Jehovah of Hosts, "but I scattered them as a whirlwind among all the nations, which they knew not." Thus the land was desolate behind them, so that no man passed through it nor returned, yea, the pleasant land was made a desolation.

(Ch. vii. 8-14.)

**A promise of better days.**

Again the Word of Jehovah of Hosts came, saying :—
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts :
I am deeply interested in Zion! With anger I am concerned for her!
Thus saith Jehovah :
I am returned unto Zion! I dwell in the midst of Jerusalem!
So that Jerusalem shall be called, A city of truth ;
And the mountain of Jehovah of Hosts the holy mountain.
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts :
Old men and old women shall yet dwell in the streets of Jerusalem,
Each with their staff in their hand for very age,
Yea, the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls .
Playing in the streets thereof.
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts :
If it seemeth marvellous to the remnant of this people in these days,
Should it also seem marvellous to Me, saith Jehovah of Hosts?

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:
Behold! I save My people from the East, and the West,
I will bring them, and cause them to dwell in Jerusalem;
Then they will be unto Me for a people,
And I will be to them a God in truth, and in righteousness.

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:

Let your hands be strong, ye who hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, who have been since the founding of the House of Jehovah of Hosts, that the Temple might be finished.

For before these days there was no hire for man or beast;
He that moved about had no peace from the oppressor;
For I delivered every man into the hands of his neighbour.
But now I am not unto the remnant of this people,
As in former days, saith Jehovah of Hosts.
For the seed of peace, the vine, shall give her fruit;
The ground shall yield her increase, and the heavens their dew.
And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

And it shall come to pass that as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah, and house of Israel, so will I save you that ye may become a blessing. "Fear not; let your hands be strong." For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: "As I determined to punish you, when your fathers provoked Me to wrath, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I repented not, so again have I determined in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Fear ye not."

(Ch. viii. 1-15.)

**The divine requirement moral, not ceremonial.**

These are the things that ye shall do.

Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour. Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you purpose wrong in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath. For all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah.

**The abolition of Fasts.**

And the Word of Jehovah of Hosts came unto me, saying:—

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts. Love ye both truth and peace.

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:

It will yet be that peoples and inhabitants of many cities shall come, and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us go continually to pray before Jehovah," and "To seek Jehovah of Hosts I will also go." And many peoples and great nations shall come to seek Jehovah of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Jehovah.

Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:

In those days it shall come to pass that ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall lay hold, yea they shall lay hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

(Ch. viii. 16-33.)

**The Date and Heading of the Prophecies of Malachi** (430 B.C.).

The burden of the Word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi.

**The divine love for Israel.**

"I have loved you," saith Jehovah, "yet ye ask, wherein hast Thou loved us?"

Is not Esau Jacob's brother, saith Jehovah, and I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains waste, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness. When Edom saith, "We are broken down, but we will return and build the desolate places," then Jehovah saith, "They shall build, but I will throw down, so that they may be called the border of wickedness, and the people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever, and your eyes shall see it, and ye shall say, 'Great is Jehovah beyond the border of Israel.'"

**The divine Complaint.**

"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is Mine honour? And if I be a master, where is My fear?" saith Jehovah of Hosts unto you, "O priests, that despise my Name." And ye say, "Wherein have we despised Thy Name?" "Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar." And ye say, "Wherein have we dishonoured Thee?" In that ye say, "The Table of Jehovah is contemptible." And ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not wrong? And ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not wrong? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith Jehovah of Hosts. And now, I pray you, beseech God that He may be gracious unto us! This hath come about because of you. Can He show any regard for your persons? saith Jehovah of Hosts. Would that one of you would shut the doors, and not kindle fire on Mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

**The Divine claim.**

For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same My Name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered unto My Name, and a pure offering, for My Name is great among the nations, saith Jehovah of Hosts. But ye have profaned it in that ye say, "The Table of Jehovah is defiled, and the fruit of it, even its meat is contemptible!" Ye also say, "Behold! what a weariness it is!" And ye have despised it, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and ye have brought that which was stolen, and the lame and the sick. If ye bring such an offering, should I accept it of your hand, saith Jehovah? Cursed shall he be that defraudeth—he that hath in his flock a male, and when he voweth sacrificeth a female with blemish unto Jehovah; for I am a great king saith Jehovah of Hosts, and My Name is dreadful among the nations.

(Malachi i. 1-14.)

**An appeal to the priests.**

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto My Name, saith Jehovah of Hosts, I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings, yea, I have already cursed them, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold! I reprove the arm,* and spread refuse upon your faces, even the refuse of your solemn feasts, and it shall take you away with it, that ye may know that I have sent this commandment unto you, since My covenant was with Levi.

**A true priesthood.**

My covenant with him was life and peace. Yea, I gave him fear so that he feared Me, and reverenced My Name.

* Stretched out to bless.

The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the lips of a priest keep knowledge and instruction is sought at his mouth, for he is the messenger of Jehovah of Hosts.

**The failure of the Levites.**

But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the teaching; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of Hosts—therefore have I also made you to be despised, and scorned before all the people, according as ye have not kept My ways, and are partial in regard to teaching. (Ch. ii. 1-9.)

**The supremacy of Jehovah.**

Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, every one against his neighbour, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem, for Judah hath profaned the Holy Place of Jehovah, which He loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. Jehovah will cut off from the man that doeth this every representative out of the tents of Jacob, and every one that offereth an offering unto Jehovah of Hosts.

**The evil of mixed marriages.**

And thus ye have done the **second** time, covering the altar of Jehovah with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with favour at your hand. And ye say, "Why is this?" Because Jehovah hath been witness

between thee and the wife of thy youth against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and thy covenanted wife. But did not **one** do this who had a remnant of the Spirit? And what did this one do? He sought a godly seed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none be unfaithful to the wife of his youth. For Jehovah, the God of Israel saith that He hateth divorce; he who in hate breaketh the marriage tie covereth his garment with violence, saith Jehovah of Hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye be not unfaithful.

(Ch. ii. 10-16.)

**The decisive judgment of God.**

Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words, and ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When we say, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and He delighteth in them;" or "Where is the God of judgment?"

Behold! I send you My messenger that he may prepare the way before Me; and the Master, whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold! He cometh, saith Jehovah of Hosts. But who can bear the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is as the refiner's fire, and as the fuller's soap, and He shall sit—a refiner and a purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto Jehovah an offering in righteousness, so that the offering of Judah and Jerusalem may be pleasing to Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in former years. Thus I will come near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that

oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and that deprive the stranger of justice, and do not reverence Me, saith Jehovah of Hosts. (Ch. ii. 17-iii. 5.)

**An unchanging ever present God.**

For I am Jehovah. I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Since the days of your fathers ye have gone away from My ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of Hosts. But ye say, "Wherein shall we return?" Will a man rob God, that ye have robbed me? But ye say, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, and ye rob Me, all ye people! Bring the whole of the tithes, that there may be meat in Mine House, and prove Me now herewith, saith Jehovah of Hosts, if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing till there be no room to hold it, and I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a land of delight, saith Jehovah of Hosts.

(Ch. iii. 6-12.)

**Murmuring against God condemned.**

Your words have been bitter against Me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, "What have we spoken against Thee?" Ye say, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of Hosts? So that now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are prosperous; yea, they that have tempted God are delivered." But they that feared Jehovah spake one to another, and Jehovah

hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon His Name, and they shall be Mine, saith Jehovah of Hosts, in that day that I appoint, as a treasure, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then ye shall again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

(Ch. iii. 13-18.)

**A final warning.**

For behold! the day cometh burning like an oven, and all the proud, and all that have done evil shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My Name the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth, and leap as calves of the stall, and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I appoint, saith Jehovah of Hosts. Remember ye the teaching of Moses My servant, which I commanded him in **Horeb** for all Israel, the statutes and the judgments.

Behold! I send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

(Ch. iv. 1-6.)

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Apocalypse of Daniel (168-165 B.C.).

**The dream of Nebuchadrezzar.**

Thou, O king, wast looking, and behold! a great figure. This great figure, the brilliancy of which was very great, stood before thee, and its appearance was dreadful.

The head of the figure was of fine gold; his breast and his arms were of silver; his belly and his thighs were of brass; his legs were of iron; his feet partly of iron, and partly of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the figure upon his iron and clay feet, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the figure became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream. (Daniel ii. 31-36.)

**The interpretation now given.**

Now we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory, so that in every place where men dwell, He hath given into thine hand the beasts of the fields, and the birds of the air, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

**The second and third kingdoms.**

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the world.

**The fourth kingdom and its overthrow.**

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth everything; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. Now as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly weak. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall form marriage alliances, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and this kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass after this, and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure. (Ch. ii. 36-45.)

**The Assigned Time** (540 B.C.).

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel

had a dream, and visions upon his bed. Then he wrote the dream, telling the sum of what he saw.

**I. The vision of the Four Beasts, or Empires.**

Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold! the four winds of heaven strove upon the **Great sea**, and four great beasts, diverse from each other, came up from the sea. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I looked till the wings thereof were plucked, wherewith it was lifted up from the earth, and it was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given unto it. Then, behold! another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up one dominion. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth, and they said thus unto it, 'Arise, devour much flesh!' After this I beheld, and lo! another like a leopard, which had upon its back the four wings of a bird; the beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold! a fourth beast, dreadful, and terrible, and very strong; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet. Now it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I paid attention to the horns, and behold! there came up among them another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold! in the horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I kept looking till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did take His seat. His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was like a flame of fire, and His wheels as a burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before Him.

Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. I looked then because of the voice of the great words, which the horn spake—I looked till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I saw in the night seasons, and behold one like unto a **Son** of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Ch. vii. 1-14.)

**The explanation of this Vision.**

I, Daniel was grieved in my spirit in my midst, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the meaning of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth, but the Saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever, even for ever, and for ever. Then I desired to know what was meant by the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass ;—which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the rest with the feet, and by the ten horns that were on his head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three fell, even that horn,

which had eyes, and a mouth speaking very great things, the look of which was bolder than that of the others. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the Saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and justice was done to the Saints of the Most High, and the time came that the Saints possessed the kingdom. Then he said, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak proudly against the Most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a **time**, and times, and the dividing of time. But the time of judgment shall come, and they shall take away his dominion to consume, and destroy it entirely. And the kingdom and dominion, and the grandeur of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all kings shall serve and obey them. Up to this is the end of the explanation. As for me Daniel my thoughts much troubled me and my face was sad, but I kept it to myself. (Ch. vii. 15-28.)

**II. A second vision** (538 B.C.).

In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which had appeared unto me before. And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw that I was

in **Shushan** the fortress, which is in the province of Elam: and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river **Ulai**. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold! there stood by the river a ram, which had two horns, and the horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one appeared last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before it, neither was there any that could deliver out of its hand; and it acted according to its own will, and boasted greatly. And as I was considering, behold! an he-goat came from the West on the face of the whole earth, and none in the earth touched him: and the goat had a horn between his eyes easily seen. Then it came against the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing by the river, and ran into it in great fury. And I saw it come close unto the ram, and it was moved with anger against it, and it smote the ram, and brake its two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before it, but it was cast down to the ground, and stamped upon, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of its hand. The he-goat, therefore, became very great, but when it became strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four horns easily seen, in four different directions. Then out of one of them came forth a little horn, which became very great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the **chosen** land. And it grew great even against the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host, and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them; yea, it magnified itself even against the prince of the host, and from him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down, and the host was

given over to it along with the daily sacrifice on account of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it did its own will, and prospered.

(Ch. viii. 1-12.)

**The explanation of the Vision.**

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto the one that had spoken, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression that maketh desolate, allowing both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" And he replied unto him, "For two thousand and three hundred days—then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Then it came to pass when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then behold! there stood before me as the appearance of a man, and I heard a man's voice at the Ulai, which called and said, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was filled with fear, and fell upon my face, but he said unto me, "Understand, O child of man, for the vision refers to the time of the end." Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground, but he touched me, and made me to stand up. Then he said unto me, "Behold! I will make thee know what shall be in the latter end of the indignation. For the vision referreth to the time appointed for the end. The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia, and the rough goat is the king of Greece, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now, whereas, when that was broken four appeared in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out

of the Empire, but none of them with the same power. Then towards the end of their rule, when the transgressors shall have done their worst, a king of fierce countenance, and full of wiles shall appear, and his power shall be great; but not by his own power. Yea, he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and do his will, for he shall destroy the mighty ones, and the people of the saints. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; yea, he shall boast himself, and shall destroy many in their security. He shall also stand up against the prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the days, which hath been told, is true, but shut thou up the vision, for it concerneth many days to come." Then I Daniel fainted, and was sick several days. Afterwards I rose up, and did the king's business. And I was astonished at the vision, but there was no one to make it known.

(Ch. viii. 14-27.)

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Prophetic waiting on God. The Seventy Years Explained.

**Supplication and waiting upon God** (539 B.C.).

In the first year of the **King**, the son of Ahasuerus, of the Median dynasty, in which he was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by the prophetic writings the number of the years concerning which the Word of Jehovah came

to Jeremiah the prophet when it was said that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem. Then I set my face unto Jehovah God to seek after prayer, and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. Yea, I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made my confession, and said :—

O Jehovah ! Thou great and dreadful God ! Keeping the covenant !

And mercy to them that love Him, and to those that keep His commandments !

We have sinned, and have done perversely ; we have done wickedly, and have rebelled,

Even by departing from Thy precepts, and from Thy laws ;

We have not hearkened unto Thy servants, the prophets, who spake in Thy Name,

To our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land !

O Jehovah ! Righteousness is Thine, but ours is confusion of face to-day.

This have the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel,

Those that are near, and those that are afar, in all lands of their dispersion,

Because of the unfaithfulness of which they have been guilty towards Thee.

O Jehovah ! Ours is confusion of face ! Our kings and our princes,

And our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee !

Mercy and forgiveness are Jehovah our God's !

For we have rebelled against Him.

We have not obeyed the Voice of Jehovah our God—

To walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets!

Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law by departing from obedience to Thy voice.

Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath written in the law of Moses,

The servant of God, because we have sinned against Him.

Yea, He hath confirmed the words, which He spake against us,

And against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil;

For under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done to Jerusalem!

As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil hath come upon us!

Yet made we not our prayer before Jehovah, our God,

That we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth.

Therefore hath Jehovah watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us,

For Jehovah our God is righteous in all His works, which He doeth,

And we did not obey His voice.

And now, O Jehovah our God! Thou who broughtest forth Thy people

With a mighty hand out of the land of Egypt,

And hast gotten Thee great renown as at this day,

We have sinned! We have done wickedly!

O Jehovah! According to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee,

Let Thine anger, and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem,

The mountain of Thy holiness !
Because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers,
Jerusalem and Thy people are a reproach to all about us !
Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplication,
And cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary, that is desolate,
For the sake of Jehovah.
O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear ! Open Thine eyes !
And behold our desolations, and the city, on which Thy Name is !
For we do not pray to Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies.
Jehovah ! hear ! Jehovah ! forgive ! Jehovah ! hearken and do !
Delay not ! For Thine own sake, O my God !
For Thy city and Thy people—Thy Name is upon them.
(Daniel ix. 1-19.)

**An interpretation of the seventy years.**

Now while I was engaged in prayer, confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah, my God, for the Holy Hill of my God, yea, while I was engaged in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at first being caused to fly swiftly came nigh to me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel ! I am now come forth to give thee an understanding mind. At the beginning of thy supplication an order came to me, and I am come

to tell thee about it, for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.

**The seventy weeks.**

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy Holy City in which the transgression shall be finished, and sin put an end to, and iniquity atoned for, and an everlasting righteousness brought in, and vision and prophet ratified, and the most Holy anointed. Know therefore, and understand. From the going forth of the prophecy for the re-building of Jerusalem unto the prince, who is anointed, shall be seven weeks (588-546 B.C.). For threescore and two weeks it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. Then after the threescore and two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, and leave no successor, and the people of a king, who shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be as with a flood, and unto the end shall be war. Desolation is determined. And this king shall make a treaty with many for a week, and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease, and upon the wing of abominations shall come he that maketh desolate, even until the determined consumption be poured forth upon the desolator." (546-168 B.C.) (Dan. ix. 20-27.)

**A third vision** (536 B.C.).

In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a matter was revealed unto Daniel (whose name is called Belteshazzar), and the thing was true betokening a great warfare, and he understood it, yea, he had understanding of the vision. In those days I Daniel was mourning three weeks. I eat

no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all till three **whole** weeks were fulfilled. Then on the four and-twentieth day of the first month as I was by the side of the great river called the **Tigris**, as I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold, even very **fine** gold. His body also was like a topaz, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the noise of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision, for the men that were with me did not see it; but a great trembling fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Thus I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, for my spirit was turned within me unto weakness and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words, and when I heard the sound of his words I was fallen into a deep sleep with my face toward the ground. And behold! a hand touched me, and set me upon my knees, and the palms of my hands, and he said unto me, "O Daniel! thou who art greatly beloved, understand the words which I speak unto thee, and stand up, for unto thee am I now sent." And when he had spoken this word unto me I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, "Fear not, Daniel! for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I have come to answer thee. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but lo! **Michael** one of the chief princes came to help me and I gained the victory over the kings of Persia.

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the later days, for the vision is still for the days to come." And when he had spoken such words unto me, I turned my face toward the ground, and was silent. Then behold! one like in appearance to a man touched my lips; then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, "O Sir! by the vision my sufferings have become great, and I have retained no strength, and how can I thy servant speak with thee my lord, for as for me straightway there remained no strength in me, neither can I breathe." Then there came one again and touched me—one like the appearance of a man, and he gave me strength, and he said, "O man, greatly beloved! fear not. Peace be unto thee! Be strong, yea, be strong." And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and I said, "Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." Then said he, "Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? For now I return to fight with the Prince of Persia, and when I am gone forth, lo! the Prince of Greece shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the writing of truth, although there is none that is on my side against these, except Michael your prince. Yea, it was I who in the first year of the Median king stood by to confirm and strengthen him. And now I will show you the course of things. Behold! there shall arise yet three kings in Persia, and the **fourth,*** shall be far richer than they all, and when he is strong he shall by his riches stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty **king** shall arise,† one that shall rule with great authority, and carry out his own will. But when he

* Xerxes. † Alexander.

shall appear his kingdom shall be broken up, and shall be divided into four portions, but not for his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up even for others different from these. Then the king of the southern portion (Egypt) shall become powerful, but one of his princes shall become stronger than he, and have a dominion, which shall be a great dominion. And at a fixed time (249 B.C.)* they shall form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north, and be married to him, but she shall not retain the aid of his arm; for neither shall he nor his power stand. Thus she shall be betrayed, and they that brought her, and her father, and he that stood by her at that time. But a branch of her roots shall stand up in his place, and come unto the army, and enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall wage war against him with success. Yea, he shall carry captives into Egypt—their gods, their princes, and their precious vessels of silver and gold. Then he shall leave the king of the north alone for some years, and he shall come into the kingdom of the king of the south, and return into his own land. And his sons shall stir up war, and assemble many great forces. One of them shall certainly come, spread over, and pass through the land. Again shall he stir up war, even to the fortress. Then the king of the south † shall be moved with anger, and come forth and fight with him, the king of the north; yea, he shall raise a mighty army, and it shall be given into his hand. Then this force shall lift itself up, and his heart shall be proud, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but it will do

* 249 B.C. Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy) married Antiochus II.
† Ptolemy Philopator, king of Egypt.

him no good. For the king of the north shall come in turn, and raise even a larger army, and certainly come at a fixed time with a great force, and with much substance. In these days also shall many rise up against the king of the south; even the robbers among thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision, but they shall fall.

(Dan. x. 1-xi. 15.)

**Exploits of Antiochus the Great** (223-175 B.C.).

Then the king of the north * shall come, and cast up fortifications, and take the most fortified **towns**,† and the arms of the south shall resist along with their chosen ones, but they shall not be able to withstand him, for he that cometh against them shall act as he chooses, and not one shall stand against him. Yea, he shall take up his position in the Holy Land and destroy it. He shall also resolve to enter it with the whole force of his kingdom, yea, with full purpose, and carry out his own wish. He shall offer in marriage his daughter ‡ to destroy the land, but it shall not succeed, neither be in his interests. After this he shall turn against the coastlands, and shall subdue many of them, but a general § shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease, yea, he shall cause the reproach to turn back again upon himself. Then he shall turn his face toward the forts of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

**Seleucus Philopator** (175 B.C.).

Then shall arise as his successor one who shall levy a large amount of taxation from the wealth of the kingdom,

* Antiochus III., called the great.
† Sidon, &c.
‡ Cleopatra was married to Ptolemy Epiphanes.
§ Roman Consul.

but within a short time he shall be destroyed neither in anger nor in battle. (Dan. xi. 16-20.)

**Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (175-164 B.C.).

And as his successor shall arise a contemptible person, to whom they had not given the honour of the kingdom, but he shall come in unawares, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries; and with the arms of a flood shall they be overthrown from before him and shall be swept away, yea, also the prince with whom he made a covenant. Even after having made the covenant with him, he shall work deceitfully, for he shall come up, and be strong even with a small force. In a time of security he shall come upon the richest parts of the province, and act in a way in which neither his father, nor father's fathers had acted. He shall distribute among them booty, and spoil, and wealth; yea, he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time. He shall also stir up his power, and his courage against the king of the south with a large army, and the king of the south shall meet him in battle with a very great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for they (the Syrians) shall make skilful plans against him. Yea, some of his own people shall destroy him, and his army shall disappear, and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings shall purpose to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper, for yet the end shall come at the time appointed. Then he shall return into his land with great booty, and his purpose shall be against the holy covenant, and he shall carry out his purpose, and return into his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come against the south, but this time it shall not fall out as it

did on the former occasion. For ships from the **West*** shall come against him. Therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and vent his anger on the holy covenant and do all he wants. He shall even return, and have regard for those that forsake the holy covenant. He shall use force, and pollute the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the daily sacrifice (168 B.C.), and set up the **abomination** of desolation. And those who act wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by his flatteries, but the people who do know their God shall be strong, and fight. And those that are the teachers of the people shall instruct many, yet they shall be stumbled by the sword, and by fire, by captivity, and by being plundered for so long. Now, when they shall stumble, they shall be helped a little, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of the teachers shall stumble that they may be refined, and purged, and purified when the end comes, because it is yet for the time appointed. Then the king shall do according to his own will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall say strange things against the God of gods. Yea, he shall prosper till anger be completed, for what is decreed shall be done. He shall neither regard the gods of his fathers, nor regard the desire of women, for he shall magnify himself above everything; but in his place he shall honour the **god** of fortresses, yea, a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with offerings of gold and silver, and of precious stones and things desired. Thus shall he act in the strongholds as to his strange god. Whosoever shall acknowledge him, he will make rich, and cause them to rule over many and divide the land among them as their reward. (Dan. xi. 21-39.)

* Rome.

**The final doings of Antiochus IV.**

But at the appointed time shall the king of the south rise against him. Then the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships. Yea, he shall enter into his provinces, and overflow and pass through them. He shall also enter into the Holy land, and many tribes shall be overthrown, but Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the Children of Ammon shall escape out of his hand. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. For he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt. The Libyans also and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the East, and the North shall trouble him, therefore he shall depart with great fury to destroy and utterly to destroy many. And he shall fix his camp for his palace between the **Seas** in the chosen Holy Hill; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

(Dan. xi. 40-45.)

**The end of the trouble.**

But at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the Children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there has been a nation, even to this same time. And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be written in the book. Then many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt. And they that were teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn the people to righteousness as the stars for ever, and ever.

(Dan. xii. 1-3.)

**A final word to Daniel.**

But thou, Daniel, shut up the Words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall study it, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold! there stood other two persons, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he held up his right hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the Holy people all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not. Then said I, "O my lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the Words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. Now from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away (168 B.C.), and the abomination of desolation set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety **days**. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be, and rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

(Dan. xii. 4-13.)

# DIVISION II.

## THE POST-EXILIAN PROPHECIES READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING, WITH EXPLANATIONS.

## CHAPTER I.

### Notes of Preparation for Restoration.

The prophetic ministry of Ezekiel came to an end about the year 572 B.C. His bright promises of an early restoration, and his full and detailed statements about the new Temple, so soon to be rebuilt by the restored people, were his legacy to his still captive nation. He had shared the sufferings of the transportation from Jerusalem to Babylon; his heart had been wrung by the news of the overthrow of the home city, and the desecration of the "beautiful House, in which their fathers had worshipped God;" he had fully participated in all the experiences of the captivity—probably dying in Babylonia. The bright visions which he had seen by prophetic eye had never become actual facts of his earthly experience. Upwards of thirty years, a full generation, had yet to run before the edict of Cyrus should open the way home, and fulfil the words of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (572-538 B.C.). Hope deferred, doubtless, made many hearts sick and faint. The delay in the fulfilment of the promise caused many to lose faith in God, and think that

their case was hopeless, their cause forgotten by Jehovah. Between 586 B.C. and 550 B.C. those born in the captivity had grown up to years of maturity, and were accustoming themselves to new employments and vocations in their new conditions, which were wholly unknown to their fathers, and altogether alien to the best traditions of an agricultural community. They not only built houses, and planted vineyards as Jeremiah had recommended, but they even engaged in the commercial pursuits of Babylon, while the poorer of them had to assist in forced labour in beautifying their heathen prison, and rearing memorials of their conqueror's greatness. History tells us about the architectural doings of Nebuchadrezzar, and the "Book of Daniel" reveals the thoughts and feelings of this great king, so fitly compared to a head of gold. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Thus soliloquised this mighty ruler, and with good reason. For in his reign Babylon reached its highest point of glory, and became the seat of a universal empire. Wealth must have been multiplied as commerce passed through the emporium from every quarter. Luxury was increased; great gifts were conferred on the temples of Bel, and Nebo. Many Jews would share in this prosperity, and even forget their country, as they failed to remember their religion. But, as ever, there would be then a pious and God-fearing remnant, who refused to sing the songs of Zion simply for the amusement of their cruel masters. They would prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy. Among these would be cherished the prophetic promises, and with eager eyes they would scan the horizon for any indications of an approaching deliverance. They would remember that Ezekiel had

spoken of 190 years as the duration of Israel's captivity, and of 40 years for that of Judah. Were not these periods now nearing their completion? Ah! yes, for in 546 B.C. both end, Israel having been first taken into captivity in 736 B.C., and Judah in 586 B.C. Among the faithful few, the kernel of the people of God, those who were the children not of the flesh, but of the promise, and so the true children of God notes of preparation for the coming restoration would first be heard—at first in whispered tones, but soon in trumpet peals, as voices loud enough to be heard both by friend and foe. But the thirty years from Ezekiel had caused many to sleep; they have now to be awakened. Hence the rousing words of the prophet of restoration, whose name is not known, but who like the great prophet of Sennacherib's destruction may well enough have been called Isaiah as the prophet of Nebuchadrezzar's dynastic overthrow. For to both Jehovah was salvation, as the name Isaiah means. The year 546 B.C. dates then a moment of supreme interest in the prophetic tradition. To this as we have seen Ezekiel's words point, and to this, as we shall afterwards find reason to think, the seven weeks of Daniel refer. The fixed and appointed time of captivity seemed now to be coming to its conclusion, and with the rise of the power of Cyrus, a firm and imperishable hope entered the hearts of the faithful. With singular dramatic pathos the prophet tells us he hears voices all around him. Herald angels seem to fill the air, and make it vocal with the promises of God. The keynote is one of comfort. A finished time of trouble, forgiven sin, and gracious recompense—this is the theme of the song, and what more grateful words could ever be spoken? A second voice takes up the notes and gives assurance as to the homeward

movements over mountain and valley, in order that there might be in the presence of the heathen some manifest vindication of Jehovah's abiding interest in His people. A third voice contrasts the imperishable and eternal Word of God with the fragile and passing glory of man, while a last voice calls upon the heraldess of Zion's restoration to shout the good news in a loud voice from the mountain top with confidence and holy assurance. For Israel's God slumbers not nor sleeps. Jehovah is Israel's tender shepherd.

The angelic voices having ceased, the prophet enlarges upon two great and prominent thoughts, even the glory of Jehovah, God of Israel, and the folly of idolatry. The true monotheism of Israel burns as a bright torch, while all around is the darkness of heathendom. Israel's great temptation had ever been to learn the way of the nations —largely had this been done in spite of prophetic warning, and now the lessons of the utter sadness, helplessness, and irrationality of idolatry, even in its most splendid form, are being pressed home to the people amid the punishment of the captivity. The absolute supremacy of Jehovah, and the uniqueness of His character are boldly set forth; His glory is seen in such a way as to convince the prophet that all nations, and all their glories are as nothing before Him. What possible object can be compared to such a God, who is the Creator, mighty Sustainer, and all-wise Orderer of heaven and earth? Verily, an idol is nothing at all, and every idol-maker or idol-worshipper is vanity indeed. In the presence of Jehovah, when He ariseth to judgment, kings and mighty potentates come to nothing. Before Nebuchadrezzar, and under the shadow of his giant temples, with "their gods many, and lords many,"

Israel, the people of God, had been cowering in fear for a generation. But they had surely forgotten much. Their abject fear is rebuked, and they are called upon to think once again of the power of their God, and to feel sure that their case was safe in His hands. All natural power has its limits, but for those who trust in the living God the resources of divine, even supernatural, power are available; in whatever circumstances they may be placed, whatever calls may be made upon them, whether to soar as eagles, or run, or walk they will always have strength sufficient. "Their sufficiency is of God."

The prophet lived in a time of immense military activity —of intense even feverish anxiety. Wars, and rumours of war were the order of the day. Armies were mustering East and West; oracles and augurs were being consulted; men's minds were moved with fear. At the Halys in 585 B.C., Lydia, Media, and Babylon, under the influence of an eclipse, formed a triple alliance, and forty years after, Croesus, king of Lydia, in his magnificent capital at Sardis, was greatly agitated about the rising supremacy of Cyrus (545 B.C.). Seven recognised oracles in all parts of the world were consulted by him only to receive evasive and unsatisfactory replies. It was a time of testing. Heathen oracles were on their last great trial. New idols were being made; new weapons were being forged. Yet Israel might dwell in security as in an ark surrounded by stormy waves. For that people God had already given guarantees of protection in having done so much for their founder. Abraham had been the friend of God. With Abraham's posterity, Jehovah had pledged Himself to remain by a perpetual covenant. Their enemies might prevail for a time, but they would soon be swept away. Israel might

be few in number as earthly kingdoms are reckoned—Jacob might be regarded as utterly insignificant, yet they would have in their midst a power making for righteousness, in virtue of which they would ultimately overcome every obstacle; they would be able to do all things in Him, who was strengthening them. Against God's church the powers of Hades shall not prevail; it is abiding.

A beautiful picture of the way in which God supplies all the need of His people is here given. Are they thirsty? Then in the deserts He discovers pools of water as to Hagar; or as at Rephidim He smites the rock, and living waters flow forth. Are they hungry, and weary amid desert marchings? Then He plants trees of abundant shade, beautiful foliage, and luscious fruit for them in the wilderness. Thus by outward physical blessings, types ever of higher spiritual ones, and consequences of a life in fellowship with God, God proves Himself to be His people's God, a God ever nigh at hand.

But not alone is Jehovah the God of nature, and of a kindly providence, He is also much more One who knows the end from the beginning—One who reveals unto His servants the things that must shortly come to pass, and this not in terms of ambiguity, but of clear certainty. When Croesus consulted Delphi how unhelpful to be told that "he would destroy a great kingdom," if the oracle meant that whatever happened a great kingdom would be destroyed. A divine response must vindicate itself, however, not as simply predictive, but as above all ethically true and clear. God manifests Himself in history. His true theodicæa is found there. The prophet points to one already gathering power and showing progress. This new conqueror, who had moved round from the East, where like the sun he first

appeared, and was now threatening Babylon from the North, is designated as the instrument of divine vengeance against that proud empire, and the deliverer of God's people. The moral significance of this new movement is what concerns the prophet; he sees with prophetic insight that it brings deliverance. No one else saw this. No heathen oracle; no wise man. He who thus sees and reads aright the signs of the times is a man inspired of the true God, "a man in whom the Spirit of God is." And those who listen to his clear, earnest, and forcible words will know most certainly whether they be of God or of man. Spiritual things will be discerned by spiritual men.

While thus Cyrus appears clearly designated for his work of service, and is even called, as was Nebuchadrezzar by Jeremiah, a servant of Jehovah, the prophet regards Israel as pre-eminently the servant of Jehovah, chosen, called, and endued for the purpose of making known the glory and righteous requirement of God in every land. This work was to be done by a people, the true people of God, as we shall soon see only perfectly by one true representative of that people, who shall embody and incarnate all that God requires in his own life. Israel at present was in bondage, and could do nothing, but the day of deliverance was approaching, when every prison door should be broken, and God's people might do great things. They were to be redeemed for highest ends; they were to be a missionary people; in service was to be found their *raison d'etre*, and their vocation. And the prophet sees the coming day when the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, when the whole known world shall sing Jehovah's praise. For long there had been a pause in Israel's missionary activity. Jehovah had been dishonoured, and was silent; but now the

crisis had come, and in a great vindication of His Name God begins to work, giving thereby highest guarantees of what would yet be. There have been such periods in the Church's history, when it seemed as if her Lord had been taken away, and missionary activity ceased. What was wanted was an awakening of the servant to be obedient to his Master, that by honouring Him, he might be used by Him. For it is not the possession of privilege, but the full use thereof that is needed. God is ever ready to magnify all that makes for righteousness, but he must have willing servants in sympathy therewith to carry out His behests. If Israel had been hindered in their true vocation by captivity, this was because they had failed to honour God at home. Signs of repentance now are seen, and in these the prophet rejoices. They make him feel that Israel, chastened by exile, will soon take the place in the world's history to which God was calling them again. Manifestly God was working for them now. He was disregarding all other peoples, and selecting them for favour. Earth's coalitions, and alliances could not stand in the way; rivers, seas or mountains could be no barrier to the ingathering of the people when God the Creater was working as the Deliverer and Leader. What they had to remember was this, that the same God, who had been with them in their Exodus experience was ever with them, as a known God and no stranger, as one that abideth with them, and not as a "wayfaring man, or one who turneth aside to tarry for a night." They had simply to bear witness to known and actual facts—simply to speak out for Jehovah, and then unhindered His work would advance. But what God was going to do in the future was to be better than anything which He had done in the past. Deliverance had been wrought already, but the coming deliverance in its

wonder and extent was to be a new thing—a most impressive demonstration to man and beast and bird that Israel had been formed to show forth Jehovah's praise.

The doing of all this would be, however, a marvel of grace. For the conduct of Israel had not been such as to move God to treat them with favour, but far otherwise. A lukewarm service, a selfish disregard of the divine claims, a positive multiplication of sin—this was what God saw when He looked down. Hence He was moved alone by love and grace—free unmerited favour was now being manifested towards Israel. God was concerned for His own Name's sake. He had to work mightily to preserve a remnant, a seed to serve Him. Grace bringeth salvation. God moveth towards humanity with forgiving, renewing love, and when this love is received many rise up to call themselves God's people, and to surrender themselves to His service.

The lack of enthusiasm and earnestness on the part of God's people is contrasted with what is found among idolaters. Heathen devotion puts to shame those who call themselves followers of the true God. Let any one go to a heathen city, and gaze upon the manifold heathen customs so zealously followed year in year out, as Paul did in Athens, he will abundantly understand the paragraphs here in which in rushing words the folly, and yet the zeal of Babylonian idolaters is set forth. Every branch of trade is enlisted in the service of the idol, and therefore made interested parties in the continuance of idolatry. The silversmiths of Ephesus were Paul's most bitter foes; they dreaded the loss of bread more than the loss of their souls. But the prophet laughs at the whole thing. Fancy making a god out of what you use for fuel! Fancy a man endowed with reason

asking the thing made by his own hands to deliver him! Some strange hallucination is upon them—a strong delusion to believe a lie! Custom and usage, the traditions of home and country, even the uses and wonts of churches may blind men to the obligations of truth, and morality. They may be very religious, and yet have a lie in their right hand. Men have to think and enquire about these things. If they will only give heed they will find all life, all nature, all history full of evidences of the working of the one living and true God.

## CHAPTER II.

### Cyrus and the Overthrow of Babylon.

The message of comfort had been delivered in the full assurance that the hour of deliverance had come, and with it the man. The movements of Cyrus are noted with intense interest. He belonged originally to Anzan in the province of Elam, and as he strengthened his position he first of all came into rivalry with the king of Media who had his capital in Ecbatana, in a mountainous, and healthy region. The Median Empire extended at the time of its highest glory from the Halys to the Indus, and its most famous exploit was the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire and its capital, Nineveh, in 606 B.C. In this undertaking Cyaxares I. was king and leader; his daughter married Nebuchadrezzar, the great king of Babylon. Astyages succeeded to the throne of the Medes in 595 B.C., and reigned till 559. This king and Croesus king of Lydia were brothers-in-law; and thus Sardis, Ecbatana, and Babylon were united by marriage alliances, and secured so far as

human policy could secure them. While general security was induced by these arrangements, and while God's people were disregarded by the world's mighty potentates, a movement had begun which was to revolutionise the whole aspect of affairs, and bring the vindication of the divine righteousness near. The history of the rise and origin of Cyrus is lost in myth, and nothing certain is known about him until about 549 B.C., when his power had become so great that friendly terms had been arranged between him and Cyaxares II. now king of Media—terms whereby the Median must have retained the dignity of Emperor, and Cyrus been recognised as his colleague and successor. Only on some such arrangement as this can we understand the references in the book of Daniel, to which later on we shall have to draw attention. The importance of Cyrus for us here arises from his treatment by the prophets. Many of the Jews, doubtless, objected to the use that was being made of this rising hero by the prophet, as they failed to read aright the signs of the times, and understand the counsels of the Most High. And yet it is not by way of hero-worship that the prophet treats him; his whole aim is to prove that God rules, and summons whom He will to execute His sovereign behests. Our traditional mode of limiting the divine anointing to kings, prophets, and priests in Israel, and the term anointed or Messiah to Jesus the true Messiah or Christ, has led many to fail in doing justice to the prophetic interpretation of history. To the prophets belonged a large and wide outlook. They regarded Jehovah as the God of the whole earth, and as having control over all kings and rulers. Hence here Cyrus is spoken of as God's anointed, as upheld by the Divine hand, not because of any religious views that Cyrus held, but simply because God was

using him to do God's work at this time. This conqueror was called by name, and upon him God's Name was called in order that by the breaking up of the world's *status quo* he might bring about a condition of things more favourable for Israel, God's chosen servant. It used once to be thought that Cyrus was a worshipper of Jehovah, but the reading of Babylonian cylinders has destroyed this fond imagination. As a Zoroastrian or Parsi he had enlightened notions about one supreme God, but not such convictions in the matter of religion that forbade him patronising the gods of Babylon, to whom he attributed his victories. Our prophet distinctly tells us that Cyrus did not know Jehovah in any worthy sense; he says that God had called him, equipped him, and aided him even though he knew not Who had done all this for him.

Not only, however, was Cyrus thus ignorant of Jehovah, Israel was also rebellious at the thought of deliverance coming this way. For deliverance they were eager, but not in this way. Hence they are rebuked by the prophet, as if the clay should dispute the power of the potter, or the child the wisdom of his father. And this was being done. Finite minds were questioning the wisdom of the infinite God; men were dictating to the Supreme the way in which to arrange the future, and to carry on His own work! In firm and confident terms Jehovah's supremacy is stated as a matter beyond all controversy. He has decreed that Cyrus shall open Israel's prison doors, and prepare the way by royal edict for the rebuilding of the city on Mount Zion, and the thing will be done. And then Jehovah shall be recognised as the true God by all far and near. Here mark the service rendered by the prophet. He does two things. He says God will deliver Israel immediately, and he says

that He will do it by the hand of Cyrus. Every objector will then be silenced, and all strangers shall be led to worship. What Jehovah proposes He does publicly, and for highest purposes. Righteousness—all that is required by the right in its fullest significance, belongs to the ways of God. In righteousness they begin, by righteousness they are governed, and for righteousness they result.

And this leads our prophet to contrast the true God with the false gods of Babylon, those gods on which, in vain security, the people were reposing. Cyrus tried to please the Chaldeans by speaking of himself as sent by Merodach to restore the religious rites, which had been dishonoured by Nabonidus, and saying in his royal proclamation that Bel and Nebo had exalted his dynasty "according to the beneficence of their heart." The policy of this king must surely have been seen through, for he simply perpetuated popular forms of worship in order to secure his own power as easily as possible. No deliverance had been wrought for Babylon by Merodach, Bel, and Nebo. The people prayed unto gods that could not save them. By and by this would be seen, and men would seek unto the true God, in Whom righteousness and strength are alone to be found.

Idolatry is a form of statecraft. All false religion is a convenience for the State. This is ever the danger attendant upon the ministers of a State church, even to become largely subservient to the temporal, and temporary interests of the kingdom. The heathen carry their gods, instead of allowing God to carry them. And the prophet sees the people in anxious concern about the preservation of their images, instead of resting calmly under the shadow of the Almighty. The true religion, as from God, must ever seek to disentangle itself from all earthly concordats,

and alliances, aiming at closer alliance with the faithful, and more constant dependence on God. A religion that is involved too intimately with any social system will be overthrown therewith. This was what so greatly endangered the Christian religion at the time of the French Revolution —State and church were supposed to be one, and, therefore, equally responsible for the gross abuses of the day; therefore both had to disappear. So now in Babylon the prophet finds idolatry helpless for deliverance; we see that it was the mere tool of conquerors.

This then is the prophetic teaching. Jehovah alone delivers, and for this end He was now calling Cyrus, eagle-like, from the East, as a man to fulfil all His purpose in this matter. Many thought that deliverance far away, but how near it seemed to the prophet. Seven or eight years seemed a small span of time indeed; living faith in God ignores the intervals of time, and hastens on to the moment of glad emancipation.

The interval in this case (546 to 539 B.C.) was occupied with the Lydian campaign. Terms having been arranged with Media, Cyrus had next to deal with Croesus, the rich and luxurious ruler of Sardis. This was the king whose earthly fortune seemed the brightest possible, but of whom the wisest man in Athens said, "Call no man happy until his death." This interval must have seemed a disappointment. In 549 B.C. Cyrus had first encountered Nabonidus, the king of Babylon, and it might have been hoped that Cyrus would go in and take the spoil. But it was not to be so. Faith was to be tested yet awhile; prophetic hopes were not to be realised just at once. The answer to prayer sometimes tarries on the way. A cylinder of the time shows that Cyrus' attack was premature, and that the king of

Media received a check, and Cyrus turned his arms against Lydia with the result that soon Sardis with all its treasure fell into his hands. Leaving his generals to prosecute the war against the Greek colonies, Cyrus returned to the attack upon Babylon. What a striking picture the prophet here gives of the overthrow of this city. It had been a royal princess indeed, with every comfort and luxury, most tenderly and delicately treated. But now in a moment the city is cast down from proud supremacy; the royal princess becomes a common peasant woman without veil, or comfort, compelled unaided to do her own menial work. And the reason of this sudden overthrow is given. Babylon had cruelly treated the people of Israel. God had indeed purposed chastisement, but not such severe treatment as Babylon had meted out to them. Their adversaries had shown no regard nor any pity to them; they failed to see that God's hand was in all this; they acted as if they alone had done it all. Success had induced complacency. Overthrow was not within their view. But with what measure they had been treating Israel, they themselves were now to be treated. God may use the wrath of man to serve Him, but the remainder of it He restrains; He will not let His own people be wholly destroyed, though for their purification He may cause them to pass through the hottest fires. In one day Babylon was to cease. The power now approaching was irresistible; it could not be avoided. No human expedient, nor wise counsel could ward off the dread moment. We do not know all about the fall of the mighty city; only hints on broken cylinders remain for our information. Further excavation may yet tell us all. This at least we learn that Nabonidus had not been a popular king. His restorations of old and forgotten

worships had caused him the loss of the support of many powerful interests. Hence it only remained for Cyrus to champion some of these to become largely popular. So that when Elam and Media go up against Babylon for the final assault (as in Isaiah ch. xxi.) Belshazzar, joint sovereign with his father, is in another royal residence luxuriously feasting, leaving his army to be led by others. This army thus forsaken, and with the consciousness that the populace was with Cyrus flees, and the gates of the city are opened by the citizens. The example of self-seeking and ease set by the court is soon followed. Every one looks after himself; private interest is supreme. As in Babylon, so at Accad, where consternation seized upon the royal guests. Only the king with guilty conscience saw the writing on the wall, but all were speedily aware that the Empire of the Chaldees was now a thing of the past. Like Nineveh and Thebes, Babylon, the glory of the Chaldees, now ceased to be a seat of empire.

To prepare Israel for this moment had been the work of the prophet. The work was not easy. For although Israel had professed allegiance to Jehovah, this was matter of profession rather than of actual practice. They were not easily persuaded to shape their lives according to faith in a living God ever controlling the events of history. A constant tendency to trust in idols had been found among the Jews. Even yet the prophet fears that some would trace the great deliverance to idols, and so he is very anxious to impress upon them that long before the event Jehovah had sent His servant to declare this very thing. Not for the sake of any merit in Israel; ah! no, Judah's sin was manifest, but for God's sake that His Name might not be blasphemed among the heathen any longer,

was God now working. Had Israel only been faithful to God how different would have been their history! They never would have experienced the woes of Babylon. This, however, in goodness God does now. He ends their captivity. The cry is heard, "Go ye out of Babylon! Flee ye from the Chaldeans!" A new song, even a song of salvation and of praise, is put into their mouth.

## CHAPTER III.

### A Peep into the Captivity. Its Religious Lessons.

In order to keep up as far as possible a certain amount of harmony with historical order in our treatment of this most interesting period of Jewish history, we now take a peep into the captivity. Material for this is furnished by the Book of Daniel, so called not because its author was Daniel, but because it tells us in its earlier portion about the experiences of the man Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadrezzar, and in its later portion associates with this great name an apocalyptic interpretation of history, under the form of visions, and their explanation. The author of the book flourished about the time when the great persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes had reduced the Jews once again to sufferings of the keenest sort, even like unto those which were endured in Babylon under Nebuchadrezzar, and he saw with his own eyes the patriotic endeavours of the Maccabees crowned with success (168-165 B.C.). The comfort that such a book written at such a time would bring to the faithful in Jerusalem cannot be over-estimated. Just such comfort would the message of

the II. Isaiah bring to the suffering saints in Babylon. The burden of both books is alike the same, that there is an end divinely put to all times of trouble. "Blessed is he who waiteth and cometh to the end of the days." The perennial truth here enshrined remains for the comfort of believers in every age. But when required, God raises up and inspires His servants to say this clearly and distinctly to the saints. Hence the true prophetic or declaratory significance of II. Isaiah, and of the Book of Daniel,—a significance that would be lost were we to ante-date these writings. Historical allusions, geographical situations, doctrinal views, and peculiarities of language determine the date of books. Furthermore as bearing particularly on "Daniel" it has to be remembered that in the Jewish Canon this book is not found among the prophets, but among the devotional writings or Hagiographa.

The historical character of the man Daniel is beyond all question. Very particular statements are given about his family and position, his early conduct in Babylon, and the high reputation that he gained at the court as a true servant of Jehovah, and a wise counsellor. It would appear that he belonged to the nobility of Judah, and was of the number of those who had been carried away probably as hostages when Jehoiakim recognised Nebuchadrezzar as his superior. This event was not a captivity properly so called, but prior thereto; it was the shadow of a coming event. Jehoiakim succeeded to the throne in 609 B.C., and when Nebuchadrezzar (who became king, 606 B.C.) was engaged in securing the conquest of Egypt, taking from that kingdom all territory held by it north of the river of Egypt, *i.e.*, the Wady-el-Arish, the king of Judah thought it wise to submit to the great conqueror, at least in appearance. Only a few nobles

chiefly of royal blood would be taken at the time to Babylon. But when Jehoiakim proved false to his oath of allegiance the wrath of Babylon was seen in the first carrying away (599 B.C.) when Jehoiachin, and the royal family with all the treasures of the House of Jehovah were transferred to a foreign land. Two other captivities followed. It is important here to remember that Daniel and his friends occupied a special position. The part of the vessels of the Temple taken, or rather given at this time, were preserved in Babylon, being used at royal banquets, whereas the remaining vessels were cut in pieces (2 Kings xxiv. 13). The calculation of the seventy years from 606 B.C. to 536 B.C. has led many to regard Daniel's removal as the beginning of the captivity. This only really began in 599 B.C., nay, it most truly began in 586 B.C., lasting exactly forty years according to Ezekiel iv. 6.

The adoption of certain royal Jews as courtiers at Babylon was quite in keeping with the policy of great emperors, who like to have in their court as representatives of conquered lands the best they can provide. Too often, however, the price of such promotion is the denial of their country's religion, men caring more, as a rule, for the favour of an earthly sovereign, than for that of almighty God. Too often in the world men have to purchase worldly rank by selling their religion. But this was not to be so in the case of Daniel and his friends. They received Babylonian names—names as in heathen countries indicative of some relation to the several deities worshipped. In India and Arabia to-day this custom prevails, and probably our designation of the name given at baptism as a child's "Christian" name may have some connection therewith. Daniel is called after Bel or Beltis, the male and female element

in a Babylonian triad. Abednego is properly the servant of Nebo, another deity. So far of course no objection could be taken. But when the partaking of the royal food was enjoined, Daniel and his friends were up in arms at once. They knew doubtless that the food itself was unobjectionable, and that the kingdom of God was not meat and drink; but they also knew that the food provided had been dedicated to idols, and their allegiance to Jehovah prevented them from having any association therewith. They resolved at all cost to be true to God, and to keep aloof from spiritual defilement. The true principle of total abstinence may be found here. The believer abstains from everything that is associated with a false religion, or with evil and hurtful practices. It is not that any principle of ethics attaches to one course of diet more than to another —different climates require different diets, but it is that a true ethical and religious principle requires a protest against everything associated with an evil custom. Men, like Ashpenaz, who discern not the importance of moral principles, cannot understand earnest men, who abstain from certain things; they regard such abstinence from their lofty platform with cynical contempt. But the cause of truth has in every age been moved on stage by stage not by the cynics, but by earnest men like Daniel. As then so now, the "blessing of God, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow," is given to those who deny themselves for the furtherance of high interests. Such self-denial is no loss, even physically. Daniel and his friends were found to possess all the qualifications required for standing before the king, and their promotion was sure. This, however, was a new thing—men refusing comfort and luxury for the sake of Jehovah. It was a public recognition of Jehovah as having claims altogether unique, and superior to those of

any other god. One god, and one religion was not as good as another. This was what Israel had to teach the world. It was because Israel had so largely forgotten this that they were in captivity.

A short time after this the great king is represented as being very much troubled by a dream. All his wise men are summoned into the royal presence to give him the interpretation. Of these wise men four classes are mentioned. We have a prophetic ridicule of these men in Isa. xlvii. 13. The king was wearied only by the multitude of sorceries, and counsels; they gave him no help, and no light at all. They plead with the king for time, speaking in their own Aramaic, but the king in anger issues his decree for the extermination of persons, who made claims to a knowledge of mysteries, which they did not possess. Now Daniel finds his opportunity, to plead not so much for himself, but for those who cared little for him. And this is the function of God's people in the world; they are to intercede, even for their enemies. But the circumstances demand prayer and much waiting on God. Men at such a time have to plead not with men, but with God. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth unto all men, and it shall be given." An understanding of the signs of the times is a divine gift, and a true prophetic enduement. It is given to those who wait on God, and walk with God. This is abundantly recognised here in Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving. Great study, and diligent search should never be neglected for a hap-hazard looking at surface indications, but when the most careful study, and research have been used there is still necessary that understanding of the drift and tendency of things that only God gives. Often the wisdom of the world fails, where faith has open vision.

Daniel now stands before his royal master in confidence, because he had been in the presence chamber of his heavenly master. He has his testimony to give to the king concerning Jehovah, viz: this, that not because of his own wisdom, but because of the Divine character, this matter had been revealed, not in answer to magical rites, or incantations, but in answer to prayer. What a lesson was this! The Jews without Temple, and ritual service had to cultivate their religious life in a new way—they had to betake themselves to the reading of the Word, and to prayer. Thus in the captivity a new and more spiritual worship was being rendered necessary. How truly humble, too, is Daniel! How such an attitude must have impressed the mighty monarch! Even by itself, if no interpretation of the dream had been given, its influence must have been great!

The particular dream and its interpretation we postpone consideration of, as here we are occupied with the historical circumstances. What we hold is that Daniel attained highest influence with Nebuchadrezzar, even as Joseph did at the court of the Pharoahs by his unrivalled knowledge of affairs, and the manifest fact that God was with him. The promotion of Daniel went along with some recognition of Jehovah. This was peculiarly pleasing to Daniel. No good man cares for promotion for its own sake; he only is concerned that the interests dear to him are thereby conserved, and recognised. In his own rise others too shared. He was ashamed neither of his religion, nor of his countrymen. Principle makes men superior to every circumstance. This is again to be proved.

Will Daniel in high rank prove as faithful to God as when in a lower position? Will threat of severest suffering

cause him to flinch from his allegiance? Will Israel in the burning fiery furnace of Babylon forget Zion? Will Jerusalem under the blandishments or the threats of Antiochus prove faithless? Can any creature separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?

A new form of idolatry is inaugurated by royal decree, for governments like to manufacture forms of religion for their own ends at suitable times. The State takes the aid of a time-serving priesthood, and would use the church just as it uses the army or the police for temporary purposes. The priests in Babylon influenced their rulers from time to time by a plea like this. The patronage of a particular worship will be a popular movement. Yes, but they forgot that while perhaps gaining large support, it would alienate others. When the State takes to do with any form of religion, the persecution of the adherents of other forms begins. A true policy for a State would be neutrality here with concession of liberty of conscience to all, carrying out in the religious sphere only what the unanimous wish of the country is. The three faithful friends of Daniel are now called upon to protest in the interests of religious liberty against State interference with the realm of conscience. They are the pioneers of true protestantism, non-conformity, and spiritual independence. Against them is brought the charge of sedition, for there are many who fail to see that among protestants have been the most loyal supporters of constituted authority. Paul, who insisted on his religious rights, recognised Cæsar as supreme in the State. Christ drew the distinction between things that are Cæsar's and things that are God's. The Jews had to stand this cruel charge that they could not be law-abiding subjects unless they fell in with idolatrous customs. Israel's mission was

to teach men that even in Babylon, those who refused to bow the knee before graven images might yet be the most efficient citizens, and the most willing to obey the civil law. They therefore proclaim their set purpose to fear God, and honour the king. They are willing to be law-abiding citizens furthering the interests of their adopted country, if they have freedom of conscience. This last is to them their first consideration. A State that denies religious liberty and equality may throw the faithful into a furnace of fire, but in that they have a divine fellowship, which buoys them up, and finally delivers them. The three faithful Jews make a noble stand. They stand by principle at all cost. They believe God will deliver them, but whether they be delivered or not —this is their ultimatum. They will not abandon Jehovah.

What these men suffered they suffered as representatives of what their people had to do and suffer in Babylon—of what God's people have to do and suffer in all ages. In Babylon God was with them, and out of Babylon God delivered them.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Fall of Nebuchadrezzar and Overthrow of his Dynasty (570-539 B.C.).

The year 606 B.C. saw the accession of Nebuchadrezzar to the throne of Babylon, and under the rule of this king his empire reached its highest point of honour and renown. He reigned till 561 B.C. for a period of forty-five years, and died about the age of eighty. In 581 B.C. and 570 B.C. he had conducted successful campaigns against Egypt, and he

was now the undisputed suzerain of the first empire of his time. But the moment of highest earthly prosperity is often the precursor of a fall. This king had obtained all he could get. What of the future? "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," and Nebuchadrezzar would be no exception to the rule. As he looked out upon the nations he could not but have his anxieties as to the future. His success had engendered pride and security. The narrative before us teaches us this lesson that to human self-sufficiency God putteth a limit and an end, inculcating upon king and peasant the virtue of humility, and the duty of continual dependence on God, and recognition of Him as the Almighty. The dream before us is a parable of human life. It shows sudden and rapid growth from almost nothing to the highest of earthly positions. It tells of a divine providence watching over human life, and having an interest in moral destiny, a concern ever manifest lest in the midst of earthly happiness obliviousness might continue as to spiritual and eternal verities. Upon the high and mighty head of Babylon the chastising hand of God fell, not to destroy, but to afford room and time for repentance. Of this approaching chastisement warning is given in a dream, which again the wise men of Babylon, bound by sycophancy, could not interpret, but which a man of God, with his eyes on the eternal world, could clearly and readily explain. Daniel, with courtier-like politeness, expressed his regret that he had been called in to tell the king of a coming time of trouble, but moved by fidelity to God, he shrinks not from his painful task. We have not full details of the life-history of this great king, but there is a tradition that a peculiar form of insanity came upon him about this time, which compelled his removal from government for

a season. How long this lasted is not known. Daniel speaks of seven seasons, but this may mean seven months, as well as seven years. Success had led to luxury, and as its consequence reason had been dethroned. The king imagined himself supreme, and blasphemed the Most High God, by failing to acknowledge Him as the giver of all authority. Repentance came in due course. The king came to himself, and recognised the supremacy of Jehovah. For how long, or to what extent this chastisement influenced the royal conduct we cannot tell. This, however, is clearly emphasized as the prophetic teaching that it is the wisdom of even the greatest of kings to acknowledge God, and to order all their life, public and private, according to His divine law. For to God's prophets kings are God's servants to execute His sovereign will; the only kingdom that has perpetuity is one which is carrying out the purpose of God. Such a principle was firmly grasped by the prophets, and shows us what insight they had, what ability they had truly to interpret all history. In the world's evolution a divine plan is being evolved. All who fall in with this plan live and prosper so long only as they do so.

Nebuchadrezzar lived some nine years after his restoration to government (570-561), but of his later years no record survives, or is yet available. His successors were Evil-Merodach, Neriglassar, Laborosoarchod, Nabunahid, and Belshazzar. The first of these celebrated his accession by releasing the Jewish king Jehoiachin, but uncertainty prevails as to the duration of his reign. Nergal Sharezer mentioned in Jer. xxxix. 3 (or Neriglassar), seized upon the throne, some think, within two years. Chief interest for us, however, attaches to the reign of Nabunahid, or Nabonidus, who is not mentioned in Daniel, but who was the reign-

ing sovereign in Babylon from 554 to 539 B.C. according to the cylinder inscriptions now in London. At some time towards the end of his reign he associated his son Belshazzar with him as joint sovereign, and gave him chief command and responsibility. A distinct prayer by Nabonidus for this son Belshazzar is now extant on a cylinder.* Josephus seems to have been ignorant of Babylonian chronology, and of the order of royal succession at this time. Hence also we find in Daniel no mention of Nabonidus but only of Belshazzar as king in 539 B.C. But the presence of the Queen-mother at the royal feast would support the view above given. Nitocris, wife of Nabonidus, and mother of Belshazzar, was an important personage. The reference made by her to Belshazzar as having Nebuchadrezzar for his father should not be pressed unduly. It may be regarded as a royal mode of speech, in which the reigning sovereign is described as the son of the most illustrious of his ancestors. The royal banquet here spoken of was in Accad, and not in Babylon. Little did the king know how near the end of his reign was. And yet must he not have been aware of the approach of the army of the Medes and Persians under Gobryas? Was it bravado that made him feast thus? Wellington, on the eve of Waterloo, quietly left a ballroom to marshal his brave followers. Brave men are confident; but there is a false security resting upon false information, and buoyed up by flattery. It was in this latter state Belshazzar was. Neither wine nor pleasure could blind his eyes to the writing on the wall; he was ill at ease in the midst of the banquet-hall. He had seen something, and he could not rest until it was explained to him. Highest honour is promised to the

* "Fresh light, &c." Sayce, p. 159.

wise man who should do this, even that he should rule along with Nabonidus and Belshazzar, and so be the third in power, or one of the three governing the kingdom at this time—an honour high, but very worthless at this moment. Daniel when called in could show his absolute disinterestedness. He would not take gifts, even if they could now be given. Solemn words are spoken by way of exhortation, and then the mysterious symbols on the wall were explained. The declaration is made that a great kingdom had been numbered, weighed and ended. Consternation soon filled the royal palace. Babylon was in the hands of the enemy. Israel's deliverer had now appeared.

The Median Emperor is now recognised as the ruler of Babylon, even Cyaxares II., with whom, as we believe, Cyrus was now ruling as joint sovereign. He was an old man, and he retained his throne only two or three years more, when on his death Cyrus is recognised as sole emperor. In the glossary we remark on the meaning of the word Darius, which we take here to be not a name, but a title. This is the simplest way to look at the matter, and it is in harmony with history. No king of that name then reigned. The only other solution is to regard the name as wrong, owing either to the writer not knowing who the Median Emperor was, or to a mistake of the copyists.

In the interval between the capture of the city, and the reign of Cyrus as sole ruler, an interesting story is given about Daniel. His position was a singular one. He transferred his allegiance at once to the new dynasty, all his sympathies and hopes gathering round Cyrus, for he could not have been ignorant of what the prophets were teaching concerning this prince. But such a man must have been an object of jealousy. The courtiers could not like a man of

such high principle, of such stern character, of such devotion to duty, and of such surpassing wisdom. He seemed to have a charmed life. But such a man was of highest value to his royal master. By universal report he had an excellent spirit, and a blameless life. Gobryas, Cyrus' lieutenant, would continue him in office and the emperor would gladly give his approval to this step. A movement, however, was at once set on foot to damage this faithful one. Would he not for the sake of securing the favour of this new and powerful government give up his religious convictions, at least for a time? Would not the Jewish people in order to secure an edict in favour of their home-going conform to the new regulations? No. It was now to be made manifest beyond a doubt that Israel's deliverance was not to come through any subserviency or compromise, but through their fidelity to principle, and through the favour of God. We can be perfectly sure that there had been many and great inducements offered to the Jews to give up their religion, and conform to the ways of Babylon. Very many, alas! succumbed to the temptation, and preferred the pleasures of sin to the perils of the home-going. But others, the faithful few, here represented by Daniel, were ready even to go through a veritable den of lions rather than to abate one iota of their belief in Jehovah. A foolish and wholly unnecessary royal decree had been issued to test the allegiance of the people. They were required to make no petition save unto the new king, for one calendar month. The king knew nothing of the scheming involved in this, and when he found out that only the religious convictions of his honoured councillor were to be suppressed thereby, he tried his best to secure some way of escape. The rigid literalism of the law prevented this,

but the king felt within his heart that such faithful adhesion to religious principle must bring its own reward. "Thy God," he said, "Whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." Vain indeed were stone, and seal, and watch. Man proposed, but God disposed.

Daniel's fidelity once again impressed king and court, and must have done much in the way of making Cyrus favourable to his own people. A new testimony was given to Jehovah, and a royal edict was drawn up giving the Jews liberty to return home, and facilities for rebuilding their temple. But Daniel remained in Babylon. He would be now advanced in years. With his fourscore years, his lofty character, and noble record he would be of more use in Babylon or at Susa, than at Jerusalem. Younger men must lead the returning people home again.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Servant of Jehovah; His Calling and Function. The True Israel, Root and Flower.

Babylon is now in the hands of a new people, and is no longer the prison house of Israel. But God's people are not to go out in a disorderly or irregular manner; they have to wait until a royal decree is signed for their home-going. Daniel and his friends, high in favour at court, would as we have seen have large part in bringing about this, even as the position of Ezra, and Nehemiah later on at the Persian court enabled them to ask, and secure similar favours for their people. But we are obviously face to face with a large

measure of disinclination on the part of the Jews to return. There was no eager longing on the part of the majority to go back to Jerusalem. Hence the prophets and the circle of earnest, and true-hearted men had their work before them in rousing and preparing this people for the carrying out of the divine programme. They had to impress upon them the dignity of their calling as the people of God, and the servant of Jehovah. They would have to show them that this position entailed upon them great responsibilities, which they could not readily throw off, without being false to all their best traditions as a people. The prophet, conscious of his own divine commission, seeks to awaken in Israel some corresponding and responsive consciousness of their mission. The work is discouraging, and he feels at times ready to give it up. God, however, encourages him by the hope that perseverance here will not only result in the restoration of Israel and Judah, but in far wider results even in the making known of Jehovah's Name to the ends of the earth. Israel might at that moment be a despised people, but when they carried out the divine purpose their doings would be the object of interest and praise among all the nations. God promises not only to restore and preserve them, but to enlarge them, and to add many peoples unto them. The restoration of all the people was meant to be a complete one. Wherever scattered, whether in Northern Assyria, or in Southern Babylonia, or in Egypt—it was God's desire that they should all return. If they did not, it was human unwillingness that stood in the way. For so far as God was concerned He had brought comfort nigh; He was even at that moment arranging for a complete restoration, in which the promises given to the fathers by the mouth of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets might be fulfilled.

The people, however, regarded themselves as forgotten, and cast off by Jehovah. The captivity seemed to them a complete destruction of their life and hope as a nation. The heathen domination seemed to have completely triumphed, and the promises of God a pious dream, mere visions of enthusiasts. The prophet hastens to prove the very opposite. He assures them that God could not forget His own people, and that He was still their husband and their father. Only because of their sins, and for a season, in wise and kind discipline, had He withdrawn from them. He was now clearly on their side. Witness the sudden fall of their former proud and invincible foe! Once they might have asked in unbelief, Can the prey be taken from the mighty? They can no longer do so now. The mighty One of Jacob had come as their deliverer.

Nor could they give any proof that as a nation they had been finally cast away. No bill of divorce could be produced; no documentary evidence of a sale was forthcoming. Israel was still as ever God's covenanted people. As the prophet realizes this, he finds himself possessed of a new courage; he challenges contradiction. No amount of opposition will hinder him giving forth his testimony. God hath not abandoned His people. In His character and purpose He is unchangeable; His covenant remains for ever. Amid the changes and vicissitudes of this world one thing is certain, and that is the enduring righteousness of God.

Appeal follows appeal. Earnest call succeeds earnest call. Three magnificent paragraphs open with a similar call. A moment of slumber seems to have come about. These sad days of captivity are only as the night of weeping; it is the dawn of day now! Hence a threefold

summons to awake is heard. Had God been slumbering? "Behold! He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers, nor sleeps." He had only temporarily ceased to work for His people as in the former days. The Exodus is remembered, and it is taken as a hopeful augury of another event as great, when once again Jehovah puts on His strength to lead His people forth. God is conceived and construed for purposes of human understanding as sleeping, resting, working, and ceasing from work. But the divine transcends all human categories. He is past searching out. On this, however, faith can rest. God is for His people always, and in the most helpful way even in times of apparent hiding. He knows best.

The second summons is addressed to Jerusalem, and with more appropriateness. Suffering had dazed this people; the divine blow had been too much for them. They have forgotten God, and none of them seem awake to their responsibilities. The trouble is compared to a cup filled with an opiate. It is now removed—the induced sleep comes to an end. Men are rubbing their eyes, and looking out with strange feelings upon new conditions, upon what seems to be a new world. They are wakening up.

But a third and even more peremptory summons comes. The call now is to get up and dress—to lay aside the garments of the night, and of mourning, and fitly robe to enter upon the life of a new day. Babylon was now in the dust; Jerusalem is to arise from the dust, and take her royal seat again. No price could man bring to secure this. No diplomacy, no tribute! No; God Himself is working so as to secure that His Name shall no longer be blasphemed. And now the prophet sees Jehovah leading home His people. He sees the heralds of good tidings on

the mountains, and he hears the glad news rung out on every side, "Thy God reigneth!" It is an orderly company of singing ones that return to Zion. Not a crowd of fugitives, fleeing as fast as they can from danger! Not men skulking out by night, by secret passages, or by back doors! No, it is all done openly with due deliberation, and after full arrangements have been made. Fear and haste never characterise the movements of the true church. They can abide God's time; they can wait for the end of the days, even for the appointed time. And God is a God of order. He ordereth the movements of history. Both van and rear-guard are under His view. Thus the prophet would teach his people yet more abundantly. Israel had not got release when Cyrus came, some objectors might say. In the moment, however, when Babylon fell the prophet got all he wanted; all other things were soon to be added.

The Exodus had been recalled, and now the Flood of Noah's time is remembered. Both these afford parallels to this time. In all three—Flood, Bondage, Captivity—there had been a burst of wrath, a hiding of the divine face for a moment, but in all three there is also divine loving-kindness, and overflowing mercy — an Ark, an Exodus, a Restoration—a Noah, a Moses, a Daniel. In all three cases the covenant was honoured, and God interposed for His people's redemption. How beautifully the prophet depicts the coming days! How hopefully he dwells upon the prosperity and the peace of his people in their own land! Alas! that human unbelief and sin have so often defiled God's world, and sullied the fairest pictures of prophet and evangelist!

But now we have a sublime section, in which the prophet deals with the highest possible fruit of his people as the

servant of Jehovah. Heathen kings, a people as a whole, the true spiritual kernel of that people, and finally one individual representing all that is best and purest in that people, embodying its ideal, and giving a last and final expression to what is conceived as the divine requirement—this is the order, ascending from a lower to the very highest representation of the Servant of Jehovah. Passages in the prophets can be quoted, and readily recall themselves, in which the term, "Servant of Jehovah," is applied to Nebuchadrezzar and Cyrus, to Israel as a nation, and to the true remnant. But here the prophet reaches his highest point, and states what a perfect Servant of Jehovah must be. He speaks of an individual, the crown and fruit of Israel. No individual in ancient Israel, not the people even as the faithful few fully approximated to the ideal here brought before us. Doubtless lessons of self-sacrifice as the way to true success were being taught, and Israel was in measure discovering that the way of self-sacrifice for others was the way to true and abiding success for themselves. But the prophetic forecasting, and delineation here tell of One who is fairer than the sons of men, and in all essentials finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

What we have is this. Great and undeserved suffering ultimately crowned with success. This was a problem with which men's minds then were engaged. The book of Job presents this problem. It was a new teaching for those days that success was to come by the way of suffering. It was specially new and remarkable that the righteous and the innocent must suffer for others. Then it was imagined that suffering presupposed sin. When the prophet came forth to declare a new revelation, viz. this, that the just, those even who knew no sin, had to suffer for the unjust, no

one believed his teaching, And such teaching, which lies at the very centre of the gospel is a hard thing for men to believe yet. In measure the prophet saw such principles embodied in a Jeremiah who suffered so intensely, in a Daniel, in the faithful three, nay he found them in his own life experience. In all these cases good men suffered for others, and by suffering advanced the good of men. And God was with them, suffering with them, so that the prophet saw this also, that the truest and divinest attribute in God is a giving up of Himself for sinful men. With all this we are so familiar since we have had the cross of Jesus erected in the world's history, and since we have heard this interpretation of it, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," but we must bear in mind that all this was new teaching at that time. To impress all this on his generation was no easy matter. None of the men of that time perceived the real significance of what was happening before their eyes. The prophet saw it. He perceived that highest results were being secured for the world by the sufferings of Israel, by a fiery furnace, and a den of lions. Hence his teaching is an abiding prophecy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Prophecies setting forth the Freeness and Fulness of the Divine Provision.

The portion of the prophecy now before us clearly sets forth the conception entertained by the prophet as to the Divine attitude towards mankind, insomuch that the

lv. chapter in particular is almost invariably regarded as the fullest statement of the freeness and fulness of grace to be found in Scripture. God's loving provision is compared to fresh pure water bubbling from the spring, to be had without money and without price. What God gives satisfies men, and stands in contrast to the unsatisfying streams of human delight, upon which so much labour and expense have been lavished. The prophet reminds his people of what God did for David, and finds in that a guarantee of a continuous gracious dealing which will result in a glorious future. Believing men are in the hands of a God whose thoughts, and ways, far transcend those of this world. He who is revealing Himself as a God of grace is the God of nature, and of providence. His ways in nature every day furnish ample illustration of His ways in grace. The rain that accomplisheth God's purpose in fertilizing the fields is a fit illustration of His blessing; the seed, which grows and develops slowly but surely, is a symbol of the divine word which liveth and abideth for ever.

What God asks for is simply a listening ear and a willing heart, which will bring about obedience in the life. The prophet overleaps the barriers of Jewish exclusiveness here, and is convinced, as was St Peter afterwards, "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." To the eunuchs, the proselytes, and all who joined themselves to God's people a kindly word is here spoken. All that is required is the honouring of the Sabbath day, and a departure from every evil way. Jewish extraction is not necessary, and already high emphasis is being laid upon that true circumcision, that is of the heart, and not of the flesh. The new Temple is to be a house of prayer for all

nations. How wide is the prophetic hope! How far in advance of those who gave a place and a name only to those whose names were found in the roll of the people! How men by their traditions, and conceptions limit God, while by His Spirit He is ever leading them into fuller truth!

We have next a prophecy that seems to be of a date earlier than those we have been considering, for it is more in the line of denunciation of sin, and of those sins in particular, which had characterised the Jews before the captivity. Standing at this place, however, it serves to contrast the grace of God with the evil doings of Israel. The heathen practices of the people had led to severest punishment in Babylon. Then many false prophets abounded; many professing teachers lacked true discernment. Selfishness prevailed, and the voices of the true prophet were silenced. Some of the heathen practices are referred to here, as, *e.g.*, the customs in Gehenna, and the determination of lots by the smooth stone of the stream. The worship on the High places, and under every green tree condemned by Jeremiah is spoken of. All this had defiled and polluted Jerusalem in the earlier days, but Jehovah had intervened to overthrow idolatry, and to purge the Holy city. The old people had been punished, and a new people thoroughly weaned from heathen ways were now appearing, who would return to possess the land. For God could not for ever hide Himself and His face from His people. He must restore comfort to all truly exercised ones; whether near or far away He gives them peace. Only the wicked are continually without peace.

Another aspect of the divine requirement is now brought forward. In Babylon there had been much fasting and much

profession of religion, all which had not been accompanied by true piety or righteous behaviour. The prophet is therefore called upon to denounce all hypocrisy, and to teach men the nature of a truly religious life. To him true religion requires from all its professors an abandonment of self-seeking, and a kindly consideration of the wants, and necessities of others. He anticipates the earnest words of St James (ii. 15-18) when he exclaims, "Faith without works is dead." Many promises are attached to a truly religious life, but they are never realized in the experience of those who are merely professors. Light, direction, vindication, strength for service, the enjoyment of privileges in the Home-land—all those blessings are assured to those who truly follow Jehovah. This only God desireth that men should place supreme delight in Him, that so He may fully and continually bless them.

Considering what God is, and what He is able to do for those who thus trust Him, the prophet sees where the hindrance to the divine working lies, and he bursts out into a most earnest lamentation over abounding iniquity, and a national confession of sin. The utter helplessness of the people themselves to rise in the defence of truth, or for the furtherance of the cause of true righteousness make it necessary that God Himself should do so speedily, and effectively. And this the prophet is assured God is about to do. The dawning day will see a wide reaching vindication of Jehovah's Name; it will see Him coming as a great Deliverer to Zion at the head of His returning people, who have turned away from transgression. Then He will renew His covenant with His people in a way that will abide, for a people after His own heart will rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Glory of Restored Zion.

We may now take it that the moment of deliverance is very near. The signs of the times are all favourable to the people, and the prophetic expectation that almost immediately a royal edict for restoration will be signed, is very great. The streaks of the rising sun already irradiate the horizon, and the prophet issues his last call to the exiles to arise, and prepare for the homeward march. The night of darkness was now ending, and the very light of God was rising to fill the heavens. In the darkness the captives saw nothing, but now what a glorious scene presents itself to them as the daylight falls upon them. They see a great company rallying, and getting ready to start. The preparation had been going on in the darkness, and now that the gates were about to be thrown open many from all quarters were eager to join themselves to the returning people. Facilities for the return are being supplied. Camels, dromedaries, and caravans aid them. They return not empty handed. As in the Exodus, so now, the people return home with gold and silver, flocks and herds. They are not a despicable crowd. Nay, they shall attract attention as the people whom the Lord hath glorified. All they require for the erection of the new Temple shall be placed at their disposal; all they require for the due and worthy inauguration of the services they shall possess. The peoples will aid and sympathize with them. Thus with eager hope the prophet sings of the glory of the new city, and its Temple, and in doing so forecasts a city and a State, which is not of the earth, earthly. Its walls "salvation,"

and its gates "praise," its judges "peace," and its officers "righteousness;" violence a thing of the past, wasting, and destruction gone—ah! these are terms in which no worldly State can be described. The description here is of a prophetic Utopia, which contains the lines, on which a true government should proceed, the ideal constitution unto which all constitutions should ever more and more approximate, but which remains for the perfect realization in the true City of God, for the coming of which God's people wait. The restored Jerusalem never received all the glory that is here spoken about, but the true Jerusalem that is from above, that shall descend from God, shall be all the prophetic vision anticipated. In the apocalypse St John uses language largely borrowed from the prophet here to delineate this new Jerusalem. Prophet and apostle thus join hands in a common faith in the words of Jesus, that He will found His church and kingdom upon a rock, and that against it the powers of death shall never prevail. Attempts have been made at different times to secure a fulfilment of this prophecy. But all efforts to antedate this consummation—to realize in imperfect conditions what is perfect and infinite, have all resulted in disastrous failure. The kingdom cometh not with observation. Persecution only results to many, and a grotesque caricature of the city of God, when men by ecclesiastical arrangements, or State enactments forcibly and prematurely seek to make all things right at one stroke. The divine purpose is ever working onwards towards the fulness of the times.

The prophet rejoices, however, in his great commission. He feels that he has been distinctly anointed for this definite service at this particular time. His message was indeed good tidings. He spoke of comfort, of liberty, of

eye-opening. He proclaimed the year of Jehovah's vindication. Mourning ceased, when his words were believed. Jesus at Nazareth read the passage to His fellow-citizens, and aroused their wrath by claiming for Himself the fulfilment of its teaching. Who else has brought such comfort, secured such liberty, or opened so many eyes? But it is the privilege and function of every prophet thus to speak. Each receives a divine anointing for this end. They all lift up their testimony to God's righteous character, and proclaim the duty of God's people to go forward to build up the walls, and advance the cause of God in the land. They are, it is true, often "only voices" crying in the midst of men, who pass them by with scorn or disregard, but they have themselves a deep joy in God, for by declaring His purpose they are drawn closer and closer to God, they understand Him better, and have a more intimate fellowship with Him. Their joy is here compared to the joy of a bridegroom or bride adorned for the marriage ceremony —a moment and circumstance, when human joy is at its highest. And so great is their personal persuasion that their message concerns the lasting good of Zion that nothing can make them hold their peace. They must speak until God's people shall in some measure realize their responsibilities, and rise to the discharge of the duties required of them. The mission of the Church's heralds is so to labour that the Church shall be seen and recognised among men as a city set upon a hill, the salt, and the light of the world. The divine purpose is to cause all sorrow and sighing to pass away. The old names implying forsakenness and desolation are to cease, and new names suggestive of truest and abiding happiness are to be given. The blessing of God is to make rich, and add no sorrow. A divine guardianship

is to secure to God's people their corn, wine, and oil. Hence they are called upon to start at once to the Home-land that so all these privileges may be theirs not in promise, or in purpose merely, but in an abiding possession.

The hesitation to start was, however, great. Pilgrimage to unrealized conditions is always hard to begin. The present ills may be great, but they may be less than others in the new conditions, and men will rather "bear the ills they have than flee to others they know not off." Difficulties still suggest themselves as to the home-going. Edom may block the way, and again display their bitter animosity to the seed of Jacob. Hence the prophet recalls to their remembrance a great and glorious victory already won over Edom, probably by Nebuchadrezzar as the instrument, but really by Jehovah, Israel's God. He sees the victorious legions returning from the conquest of Edom, and the overthrow of Bozrah, but he sees more. He sees at their head not an earthly leader, but Jehovah Himself; and he proclaims to his people that their God had Himself fought to secure their deliverance already—that He had identified Himself so thoroughly and entirely with their cause that He is covered with the blood of their foes, and the dust of the field. Israel did not achieve this victory; it was wrought for them by a divine interposition. So it may and will be again. When the hour of their need shall come, then too shall come the moment of their deliverance. And thus in the Cross of Jesus we have a divine interposition for sinful humanity. When no human eye could pity, and no human arm could bring deliverance from sin's curse and thraldom God Himself intervened, and in Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, by destroying the power of the enemy. This is the message ever given by the prophets to Israel, and this

is the message of the Gospel to every age. God is His people's sure and perfect deliverer. They who put their trust in Him shall never be put to shame.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Words of Warning on the Eve of Return (538 B.C.).

Deliverance having thus been promised, and made a sure hope to the Exiles, it now only remains for our prophet to remind the people wherein their strength lay, to rebuke all unbelief, and to prevent any false views being entertained as to the new life. He would have them remember that they owe all to the working of Jehovah on their behalf. God had become their deliverer, because they were His chosen people. But they are reminded as in the song of Moses of their continual waywardness, and the necessity laid upon God to fight against them. The Exodus deliverance is, however, again recalled. The leadership of Moses and Aaron, under the divine shepherding, is remembered. How tender and considerate it all was during those weary Wilderness years of wandering! In all this God made a name for Himself, which is His name for ever. Mercy indeed belongeth unto God, but shame and confusion of face unto men. The prophet would have Israel feel this, and lie low at the mercy-seat, pleading for forgiveness. He would have Israel be gladly obedient, placing themselves in God's gracious hands, as the clay in the hand of the potter. When Israel do this, they occupy the right attitude towards God. When they acknowledge that their sins had deserved chastisement, and recognise God as their

God, who alone can do anything for them, then they may be assured He will no longer hold His peace, and afflict His people.

The divine calling in grace is abundantly emphasized in this portion of the prophecy. It was just as if the prophet felt that Israel's temptation was to undue self-confidence. God had sought this people when they were not seeking Him. He had revealed Himself to them when they were not expecting such gracious dealing. He had by a long ministry of prophets spread out His hands unto a rebellious people. Hosea felt that the more God called them, the more had they gone astray (xi. 2). The evil customs of the pre-exilian days in Jerusalem are referred to. The distinct violations of the law are enumerated, the burning of incense on the High places to false gods whereby God had been blasphemed is recalled, and the necessity of special dealing made clear. So rotten had the mass become that for the preservation of true life a great cutting away had to take place. The old people had to be cut down even as a tree is felled, but the substance was to remain in them (Isa. vi. 13), and out of the root and stem of David a new people were to appear. Then once again would Sharon be a pasturage for flocks, and the valley of Achor associated with memories of early days, be occupied by happy herdsmen. All who were estranged from Jehovah would be entirely destroyed, and only those would be restored who would prove themselves faithful unto their God. A new future is depicted. A new people, with a new name, a new allegiance, in a new city! All old things are to pass away, and all things are to become new. The past things are no more to be remembered. The curse, if not entirely removed, is to be greatly modified and counteracted. The features of a

Hygiæa are drawn—a city of health. But emphasis is laid upon moral and spiritual conditions, rather than upon those of a more physical and material kind which bulk so largely in modern schemes of social amelioration. Under the favour of God life is to be prolonged to a normal length. Infantile mortality is to cease—that dark blot on our 19th century civilization—while premature death is to be unknown. All who live as God would have them live are to complete their days. A large measure of success is to attend human activity. Disappointment is not to be the law of life; men are to gather in and enjoy the work of their hands. No words of praise can be too high for those who are seeking to improve the material environment of men. In this effort they may not relax. But might not many of them remember, what the prophet here emphasizes, that those live best and longest who are a people "blessed of Jehovah"?

The promise of long life and prosperity in the new city is clearly attached to spiritual conditions—the absence of these would entail the loss of the former. A statement of this principle is here given; the necessity of its reiteration was great. Many in Israel among the returning captives with Ezekiel's full and detailed plans for a new Temple in their hands might be inclined to forget that the Divine presence was more important than the Temple;—that the spiritual reality was more important than the material fabric. Hence a note of warning is struck. The more spiritual demands of Jeremiah are placed side by side with the teaching of Ezekiel. No word indeed is spoken against proceeding with the Temple building, but an earnest word is uttered against any undue reliance being placed on the Temple, and any false confidence being placed in ritual

service when moral conditions were wanting. The prophet is anxious that his people should have an adequate conception of the divine glory as filling all things, and transcending all material limitations. The dedication prayer at the opening of Solomon's temple expressed the prophetic truth here along with a recognition of the divine condescension. "Behold! The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this House that I have builded! Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant . . . that Thine eyes may be open toward this House night and day" (1 Kings viii. 28-29). Nothing pained the prophets more than seeing men, bad men worshipping in the Temple courts, and thinking in their ignorance that a mere *opus operatum*, the mere doing of a religious ceremony by itself would do them good. This Christ condemned in His parable of the Pharisee's prayer in the Temple. What the Master then required as set forth in the attitude of the publican, the prophet here emphasizes. He mentions three conditions, all of which belong to a man's spiritual attitude, as essential before God can look with favour on any worshipper. He must be spiritually poor, or afflicted, his spirit must be contrite, and he must have a reverential fear for the divine Word. "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." A solemn warning is given against any superficial disregard for the sacred ceremonies of divine worship, against any failure to remember what is due unto God. And men are told that if they choose their own ways, and neglect God, they will be left to the misery of these ways, without any hope of deliverance. The true people are comforted and encouraged. They must be prepared for opposition. Those who had remained in the Home-land,

and those who had gathered from the country around to occupy the deserted places, regarded the exiles as finally cast off, and viewed the possibility of restoration as a pious dream. Those who were about to return would have to reckon on all these as their foes. But the prophet assures the heirs of promise that God having done so much must go on to crown His work with glorious success. Zion shall not only travail, but shall have much joy in her many sons. No opposition shall be sufficient to stay or hinder the divine purpose of grace. Hence the prophet calls for joy and exultation in the bright prospect so near at hand. The infinite tenderness of God is brought out, He has not only the might and protecting power of a father, but the yearning sympathy and love of a mother. The natives of India have an expressive word for one whom they regard as a true and sufficient protector. They call him Mother-father, combining in one word all that is implied in these two. The prophetic representation of God is of this sort. He is His people's Mother, as well as their Father! He turns His tender aspect towards His children, while His face appears full of fury towards His enemies, towards all those who dishonour His requirements, and mix themselves up in heathen customs, or mysterious rites.

Jerusalem is once more to be a missionary centre for the world. The law is once more to go forth from Zion. The restored people are to find their highest glory in making known Jehovah's Name to the most distant lands of earth. Offerings from every part of the known world are to be brought to the Holy City. This was what Israel was to do, but the people having failed to carry out this programme, the prophecy awaits a grander fulfilment in a spiritual re-creating of all things. For unto the end a seed

shall ever be found, who shall worship God, but the wicked shall be continually punished, their punishments being ever present as a warning voice.

## CHAPTER IX.

### The Royal Edict for Return. Prophetic Activity in the Home-Land (536 B.C.).

We have already seen that a twofold human preparation was going on, making restoration an ever more probable, and near event. The influence of Daniel in the royal court of Cyrus, and the indefatigable labours of the prophets among the people. The mind of the great conqueror was being greatly impressed by the character and claims of the Jewish people, and this people were not being allowed to forget that God had some good thing in store for them. But besides all this, it has now to be noticed that Cyrus had a distinct policy, in which he largely reversed that of the predecessors. They had carried conquered nations into captivity, filling their places by other peoples. They thought in this way to secure peace, and prevent rebellion throughout their extensive Empire. Now, doubtless, the strong arm if continued long enough might obtain this, but there was great danger, for right in the heart of the Empire there were masses of people yielding unwilling allegiance, and longing for the day when the conqueror's power should be broken. Cyrus himself knew something about this. He himself had broken loose at the head of his brave tribesmen. Love of country and of freedom was strong in their hearts. Hence when he ascended the throne he

inaugurated a new policy whereby conquered peoples might return to their own countries, hoping to win their gratitude and allegiance by acts of favour. This was a wiser policy, and more certain of securing the ends desired. And during the ten years (538-529 B.C.), during which Cyrus reigned as sole Emperor, all parts of his Empire were treated in a noble and magnanimous manner. He fell in battle in 529 B.C., while engaged in reducing the independent tribes beyond the Oxus, and the Jaxartes.

We are, however, only concerned at this point with the fruits of the new policy, so far as it concerned the Jewish people. The prophet Jeremiah had distinctly proclaimed restoration after seventy years (606-536 B.C.), and Ezekiel had acted upon this belief, while as we have seen the second Isaiah, and kindred spirits were busy in Babylon and elsewhere preparing the people for this hoped-for event. The memoirs of Ezra tell us of the royal proclamation issued by Cyrus, in the drawing up of which high-placed Jews must have had a large hand. Its terms are so phrased as to have proved extremely agreeable to the Jewish nation. And this was clearly its aim as a State document. At this time God was actively intervening for His people's deliverance. Cyrus was not himself a worshipper of Jehovah. But as a wise governor over nations holding diverse views in the matter of religious conviction, he allowed a large measure of religious liberty. His conquest of Babylon was attributed by him to the gods of Babylon, and so he gained access to the people's affections. Now he puts in a royal edict in favour of the Jews the statement, that he had been moved to authorise the rebuilding of the Temple by Jehovah Himself, the God of the Jews. What could have better furthered his objects,

or been more pleasing to the people concerned? The result was that a goodly company now availed themselves of the royal permission, and that those who remained behind gave presents of gold and silver, of goods and cattle, so that those who went home were well supplied for their undertaking. Ezra tells us that 42,360 Jews returned, having 7,337 followers besides 200 singing men and singing women. They had a large quantity of horses, mules, camels, and asses for the journey. Their leaders were Joshua the high priest, who was the grandson of Seraiah, who had been the last to minister in the old Temple (Jer. xxxvi. 26), and Zerubbabel, a prince of the House of David, and grandson of king Jeconiah, who had died in 560 B.C. The people were singularly fortunate in having such leaders at the time, both being in the full succession, and high hopes gathered round those two distinguished men, noble in birth, and high-minded in principle. Starting at once they were able to begin the Temple, and dedicate the altar in 534 B.C. This was a time of great joy, but it was the prelude to strong and bitter opposition, which continued for thirteen years, from the people of the land. These people desired to have a share in the new Temple, and city, but their objects being looked upon with suspicion, and their request being refused, they became pronounced enemies. They wrote to Cambyses urging him to stop the building operations in Jerusalem, on the ground that as in the past so probably in the future this city would prove rebellious. Very different counsels now prevailed at the royal courts. Cambyses was impulsive and tyrannical. His mind was set on the conquest of Egypt, and his fears were aroused that Jerusalem might become a source of weakness to him in his great campaign.

Peremptory orders were therefore issued to put a stop to further building of the city. How vain is confidence in princes! What one sovereign grants, another recalls! When, however, Cambyses was fully occupied, and the leaders of the Jews had recovered from the stunning effect of the royal prohibition, prophetic activity again appeared. Haggai and Zechariah arose to rebuke the prevailing indifference, and called upon the people to proceed energetically with their great work. And circumstances soon again became favourable. For those who were saying that the time for rebuilding the Temple had not yet come, and were excusing their own self-seeking under the cover of obeying the powers that be, the time came. Cambyses was succeeded in 521 B.C. by Darius, a prince more after the character of Cyrus, more inclined to peace, and a friendly policy. This new king made diligent search among the royal archives, and discovered the royal edict of Cyrus, showing that the Jews had ample authority for all that they had done. He then ordered the adversaries to allow the work of the House to go on. This was obeyed. The elders of the Jews went on to build, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah. Within six years from the second royal edict the Temple was finished and dedicated. This took place in 516 B.C.

The resumption of prophetic activity at this time is extremely interesting. The prophetic function as declaratory of the mind and will of Jehovah is clearly brought out. After the fulfilment of the great prophecy of restoration, prophecy seemed silenced. An interregnum appeared in the prophetic succession; but this was not to last long. God never leaves Himself long without a witness. The

eighteen years (538-520 B.C.), had their divinely laid out work; the people knew quite well what God was wanting them to do. But the full enthusiasm had died away; the rise of opposition made many hands hang down; difficulties instead of nerving men to more strenuous endeavour, paralysed them. Hence a voice of God was once more required to rouse them to faithful adherence to the divine programme. We have two distinct prophecies of Haggai, then one by Zechariah, and a third by Haggai.

In the first prophecy here Haggai meets the objection that the time had not come for going on with Temple building. The signs of the times were against this, they thought. Yet they were busy furthering their own interests; the signs of the times were not against these! Ah! the prophet saw through the poor excuse. Self-indulgence, and ease were what was really hindering the work. And these evil things were causing God to withhold His blessing from the land. They had had poor harvests, bad investments, no satisfaction. "Consider your ways," cries the prophet. A neglect of plain and obvious religious duties had brought down upon them the disfavour of God. God's House lay waste and disregarded, while every one looked after his own house. Religion in every age represents the noble principle of self-sacrifice, that which alone makes life worth living, that which alone brings it into line with the divine. It wages perpetual war with the selfish instincts of mankind, and raises a protest on behalf of truest wisdom. It declares that there is that "which withholdeth more than is meet but tendeth to poverty:" that "he that seeketh to save his own life shall lose it." "The blessing of God maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith."

A selfish interest in one's own self may bring a short-lived prosperity, but an unselfish, self-sacrificing spirit obtains lasting and abiding fruit.

This first message roused the leaders of the people to renewed activity; the people themselves were convinced of their sin. Then came the assurance of the promise, "I am with you," saith Jehovah. To know this, and to be moved by it, was what they needed. They now began again to put God first, and the other things were added unto them.

About one month elapses, and once again Haggai is sent with a divine message. Progress was slow. The appearances of things did not promise so well as many wished. A spirit of depreciation and criticism arose. They made contrasts and comparisons between the old Temple, and the new one slowly rising. This tended to damp the zeal of many. Hence the prophet comes with a call to courage, and manly ongoing in the work. He bids them remember the divine covenant, and assures them that despite all appearances to the contrary, God's Spirit remaineth among them. He would have them look up to God, rather than to their own doings; he would have them think of what God could do for them, rather than of what they were doing for themselves. The prophet has great ideas of what God can do for His people, if only they believe and obey. Go on with your work in hope and expectation. God is not done working on your behalf yet. Much spoken by the prophets is as yet unfulfilled, slack not your efforts, no, not for a moment! All nations were to send their tributes to the new Temple; the silver and the gold all belonged to Jehovah, and He could make this second Temple even more glorious and splendid than the first. The divine resources

are infinite. In this way the prophet encourages the builders by speaking of a near future. We cannot think that reference of any distinct kind is made here to Christ's coming. This Temple of Zerubbabel was not the Temple in which Christ appeared. It was to Herod's Temple He came, and He came to it only to be cast out, and asked by what authority He presumed to interfere with its arrangements. The prophet spoke to men, who were discouraged, who did not see where the ways and means were to come from. He points them to God. Such a message is always valid; it is always necessary.

In the next month it is Zechariah, who is chosen to be the spokesman and mouth of God, Haggai's last message is kept over till the ninth month. These two prophets had a conjoint ministry, being colleagues in the work of Jehovah at this time. They were agreed upon what they had to say. This particular message before us is in line with Haggai's, and with Jeremiah's great call to repentance in the early days of his career. This prophet had declared the certainty of judgment in the event of no amendment appearing. The entreaties of Jeremiah were neglected, and judgment fell in awful severity. What Zechariah inculcates is the need of the people having a keen sense at all times of the divine hatred of sin, and of the necessary obligation under which even God Himself lies to punish sin, all the more when it is found in His own professing people. What happened to Israel once may happen again. The fathers perished because they would not listen to warning voices; let the children beware. And these warning voices will not always last. Men may neglect them for too long a time, only to lose them for ever. The prophets do not live always. Zechariah is listened to; his words bring about a

national repentance, a recognition of the claims of God, and an earnest desire to do His will at once.

Another monthly convocation is held, and Haggai gives his third, and last prophetic interpretation of the divine will. It is still in accents of warning and complaint. Its aim is to point out the essential and abiding principle that the moral worth of all service depends on the character of the persons who render it. The presence of sacred signs and symbols does not make anything sacred in God's sight, while an unholy man will make the most sacred things impure. Israel had to have this lesson continually pressed in upon them, and no age gets beyond it. Dependence on rites and ceremonies is always a temptation. It is always easier for a man to do certain things supposed to be prescribed for a religious life, than to be religious in his inner life. And the prophets of God have always to teach men that failure to receive spiritual blessing, slackness in spiritual efforts, or any backsliding is due to the absence of true life in the soul, and to an undue reliance on the outward forms. Haggai points out the smallness of the measure in which Israel had been blessed—it was only half of what it might have been, or what it ought to have been in normal conditions. And here is the reason. The people had not wholly followed the Lord ; there had not been a whole hearted devotion to the work to which they were called. But now signs of a more genuine interest are being shown, the people are becoming sensible of their obligations, therefore God is about to bless them fully. A time of prosperity is promised to Israel ; the troublous times during which City and Temple were being rebuilt, are soon to cease for a season.

## CHAPTER X.

### The Visions of Zechariah (520 B.C.).

The prophecies of Zechariah take for the most part the form of visions. For leaving out the introductory words spoken by this prophet in the eighth month, to which we have already referred, and the interesting historical episodes at the close, the intervening chapters contain eight visions bearing on the current history, and immediate future of Israel. The time, too, is very definitely fixed—all the visions came to the prophet in the second year of Darius king of Persia, while the concluding chapter of his prophecy is dated in the fourth year of that king (518 B.C.). The portions beginning with the ix. chapter bound up with the writings of the prophet have characteristic features all their own, and seem to belong to earlier periods in the history of the people. We have therefore treated them in our first volume among the pre-exilian writings.

The form of vision or apocalypse is not altogether new at this time as a method of divine communication, but it now becomes increasingly adopted. The larger part of Zechariah's message is thrown into this form, while as we shall soon see the same applies to the book of Daniel. Ezekiel had already employed visions to set forth divine truth. In the introductory verse to his prophecy we find him saying, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." So also in chap. xi. 2., and elsewhere, while the prophecies of Nahum and Obadiah are entitled "visions." The two words, used in the Hebrew to denote the vision, refer to the matter from two different points of view. That

used, *e.g.*, in Obadiah (v. 1), regards the vision more from the subjective side as seen by the prophet, the seer; while that used in Ezek. i. 1, regards it more objectively, as an object, as something seen. The first word supplies occasionally a name for a prophet as one who sees visions (Amos vii. 12), while in older days the second word supplied the designation generally used (1 Sam. ix. 9). The name which distinctively belongs to the prophet in the Old Testament is one which characterises him as a declarer of the mind of God * (Exodus vii. 1). And this was the function of all the prophets, whatever the method they employed. Some felt the burden of Jehovah pressing upon them; others received the Word of Jehovah; others again saw visions—but all alike spoke on behalf of God as Jehovah's representatives.

Zechariah gives eight visions. We look at them in order. In the first the prophet sees the earth at rest, with no indication of that shaking of the heavens and earth of which just a month before Haggai had spoken. The messengers of Jehovah are seen returning from all quarters, and with this intelligence that the earth is in a state of quietude. Indifference to the interests of Jerusalem, and the welfare of her people prevails. Cambyses had opposed the Jews and devoted himself wholly to his Egyptian campaigns, until his death in 522 B.C.. After a brief moment of suspense Darius became king, a false rival to the throne having been slain. A new system of government now began. Cyrus had been regarded as a father; Cambyses had made his power felt as a master; Darius now devotes himself to a quiet and orderly administration of his empire. He reigned for the long period of nearly forty years (521-486 B.C.). The

* The Hebrew words are given in Glossary, p. 241.

end of the reign of Cambyses was the beginning of brighter days for Jerusalem. The seventy years of actual trouble now closed. Jehovah now returned with overflowing mercy to Jerusalem, and a period of uninterrupted prosperity fell to the Jews.

The second vision deals with the historical circumstances of the times. Four horns or empires of power are seen by the prophet. This mode of representation we shall meet with in great detail in "Daniel." The horns had scattered the Ten Tribes, and had been guilty of greater cruelty to Judah, than had been necessary. But the day of vengeance had come, and they were all reduced to subjection forming parts of the great satrapies or divisions, into which Darius had divided the empire. The four horns may represent generally opposition to the Jews coming from the four quarters of the world, or the prophet may have thought of Syria, Assyria, Egypt and Babylon, all of which in their day had persecuted Israel. What the prophet now sees is the complete vindication of Jehovah's Name. Not one horn now dared lift itself up against the chosen people. The workmen appointed by God to break and destroy these horns had done their work thoroughly and well. The nation that had been so signally delivered need have no fear of interruption in the circumstances that had been thus providentially brought about.

The third vision contains a protest against any premature measuring of the new city, any limitation of it to suit the present needs of the people. The measurer's work is the last to be done; it means the assessing of work done, when all the contractors have finished and retired from the place. The prophet sees the measurer starting to do his work in Jerusalem, but he sees him forbidden to proceed any

further at this point. Human unbelief comes to rash and hasty conclusions. It never reaches to the fulness of the divine promise, and when it professes to take any move in the direction of compliance therewith it calls a halt so soon. The "is" men take as the measure of the "to be." It is forgotten that the divine purpose and promise is always fuller than any measure of fulfilment. There is a warning addressed to the young here. They are more liable to fall into rash conclusions, the older we grow the more we learn of the divine fulness. What the prophet would teach then is this. Have great faith in the possibilities of the growth of the city. Put no human bounds to this. Remember that God is a wall of fire—an invisible, but yet very real and effective, wall of defence for His people. This He always is to men and nations, when He is recognised as the glory in the midst. Our God, a God recognised in all His love and power as ours is indeed our defence. Fortified walls are a vain defence if God is not within the city; if God be within then walls are not needed without. Jerusalem could learn so much from this third vision. The prophet having hopes so great addresses a call to those still in exile, in the land of the north. It was indeed a disappointment that so few had joined the new Exodus, but the years between Cyrus and Darius seemed to justify the prudential considerations of those who remained in ease in Babylon. A new opportunity, however, is given by the new circumstances, and the prophet urges many to avail themselves of it. He would not have those who had already come refuse permission to those who had delayed. Up to the eleventh hour he would keep admission open. How liberal and comprehensive is prophetic teaching! A stereotyped adhesion to the roll would soon have narrowed

the population of the city. A full and free invitation is given to all to return, who will accept Jehovah as their God, and His Law as their guide. The terms of the Gospel invitation are like unto these.

Having thus shown how favourable all external circumstances were to the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem, and how desirous Almighty God was for the enlargement of the city, and an increase of its population, the prophet now in his fourth vision deals with the internal government of the people. Questions had been raised as to the authority of the High Priest Joshua, and difficulties had sprung up about the relation between him and Zerubbabel. The old, yet ever present, problem of jurisdiction as between Church and State, ecclesiastical and civil authority had to be dealt with. In Ezra ii. 63 we read that Zerubbabel the governor was not wholly satisfied that Joshua had all the requisites for his high office. He had not the Urim and Thummim. Now in the new conditions these mysterious stones might not be required; the law and the testimony had now received definite embodiment in the writings of Moses and the prophets. By these the will of God had been declared to men, and in a form accessible to all. Joshua certainly had not all the old prestige of the Jewish High Priest, and he had his accusers. Zechariah deals then with this situation, and shows that whatever the High Priest lacked, he had the divine favour resting upon him. He had been brought back from Babylon as a brand plucked out of the fire, which had consumed so much dear to Judah. He had been accepted by God. The prophet in vision sees God's servants placing the priestly mitre on Joshua's head, and clothing him in the robes of high priestly office. The vision is seen by his fellow priests—

they are witnesses of this sign, and they are to tell all it means. This was the Branch that had sprung out of Aaron's race, and which was at this time to flourish in Jerusalem. The seven eyes of Jehovah—symbols of omnipresence, were watching over Joshua, and if he only did what God required of him in ordering well the Temple, the divine blessing would never leave him. He would be continually one of God's favoured ones, having admission into the heavenly councils. Sufficient guidance in all essential matters would be given by this High Priest to the people. He could order the sacrifices of the great day of atonement, and secure an orderly and peaceful administration of all religious rites. Thus the prophet sought to secure for Joshua the recognition of his high office.

But the prophet is in favour of co-ordinate jurisdiction as between State and Church. While endeavouring to secure the full acknowledgement of Joshua as High Priest, he at the same time seeks to set forth the position of high honour, as divinely anointed ones, which both Zerubbabel and Joshua are to occupy. With this, vision five is concerned. Under the figure of a golden candlestick with its seven lights, the prophet would have the people see represented the sacred interests of Zion, and under the figure of two olive trees supplying the golden candlestick he would set forth the guardianship assigned over these interests to these two anointed ones, Zerubbabel and Joshua. Each is an accepted and appointed leader in his own sphere. How wise and helpful was this prophetic teaching! How suited it was to remove friction, and asperities! The high honour and dignity of Joshua as High Priest had been maintained, and now the authority and success of Zerubbabel as Prince or ruler in the secular sphere is assured. It was to be his

to push on the Temple building until the top stone should be laid amid shouts of rejoicing. No obstacle would be too great for him to surmount; every mountain of difficulty would become before him a plain. This divine purpose would be accomplished by the divine spirit even against every coalition of might and power. Those who had been disappointed by reason of the slowness of the work of building, and who had been contrasting somewhat unfavourably the present Temple plans with those of Solomon's, would yet rejoice when they should see the building complete, and Zerubbabel in royal ceremonial with the plummet in his hand declaring the Temple ready for divine worship. It was to be his as head of the people to forward the earthly parts, the temporal and financial concerns of the Temple—to do all in his power to make it easy for a worthy House of God to be reared by loving and eager hands. Then Joshua would begin his work as God's representative in the House. Perfect co-operation is possible when there is clear definition of spheres. The High Priest was to be supreme *in sacris*, while the Prince must rule *circa sacra*. Both civil and sacred authority are anointed by Jehovah.

Having in this way dealt with the position and authority of the leaders of his people, the prophet now turns his attention to the condition of the people themselves. In the sixth vision he sets forth the absolute necessity of holiness on the part of all dwelling in the new city, and engaging in worship in the new Temple. Two great sins come in for special mention and condemnation; these are stealing, and false swearing. Upon these two sins, which must have been common, a solemn curse is pronounced. These sins would bring the curse home to roost. A terrible curse it was!

Unless they were driven out entirely the curse would

destroy the comfort, nay, the very existence of the house in which they were found. The "curse causeless" would not come. This emphatic teaching as to the obligation of the moral law was at that time most important. No amount of zealous devotion to Temple rebuilding could atone for sin in the midst of the people. The flying curse would enter the house of the most prominent worker about the Temple, if he were guilty of sin. In close connection with this sixth vision comes the seventh. In the one sin is condemned, and ordered to be removed; in the other it is packed up, and removed far hence. The *ephah* or large vessel, which the prophet sees, was, or contained, wickedness. In a representative manner, the sin of the people is gathered, placed in this vessel, and closed up. Then the vessel is carried away out of the Holy land, and placed in a heathen land, its fitting destination. The prophet knew that many evils had been brought from the captivity in Babylon by the Jews, for they could not have remained there without moral contamination. All this must cease, if God's presence were to dwell in the land, and His blessing were to rest upon the people. They must be a holy people, and have no sin in the midst of them. It was good to leave Babylon, but it was more important far to abandon sinful ways. The only separatism that has value in God's eyes is separation from sin. There is a limitation here in the prophetic outlook, showing that he was still a particularist. He does not entertain the view that the whole earth is to be cleansed from sin; for the present, at least, his aim is to have the land of Judah thus thoroughly cleansed. In this respect he falls below the lofty idealism of the second Isaiah. But perhaps his practical instinct led him to labour for the removal of evil from one place first,

in order that by and bye it might he removed from every place.

The last vision again deals with the divine messengers whom the prophet sees passing into every quarter to ascertain the prospect of affairs. North, south, east, and west they go, and they come back to speak of peace and quietness in the earth. More particularly the vision assures Jerusalem that no trouble is to be feared from the north, that quarter from which so many invading armies had come down to devastate the Holy land. The campaigns of Cambyses had quieted Egypt, and the new movements of Darius against the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, and Greece herself, would no longer cause any anxiety to Judah. So long as Egypt was a rival to the Empire of Persia, and armies passed along the Philistine coast, Jerusalem was always in danger. But now the tide of conquest took a different course. The march of armed men was to be along a new route. Cambyses, ere he left Egypt, inaugurated a policy of consideration for Egyptian ways and religious observances, which Darius continued. The temples at Sais, and of Ammon in the oasis and at Thebes were patronised and restored. Egypt remained quiet, though not reconciled altogether to Persian rule. Her attempts at revolt were futile. The Persian fleet now ruled the sea, and when Xerxes ascended the throne in 486 B.C., he tightened the reins of government considerably. The scene of interest now shifts to the new world of the West; the despotisms of the East are soon to fall before the rising powers of the Greek-speaking world. For two centuries and more after this Jerusalem can view the world-drama from afar, as an almost unconcerned spectator.

## CHAPTER XI.

### Zechariah's Closing Words, and Malachi's Message (518-430 B.C.).

The progress of affairs in Jerusalem could not but arouse a measure of interest at Babylon among the Jews still there. And just about the time that the Temple was approaching completion deputations were sent to the Home-land to discover the significance of the state of things. Those who had hitherto remained indifferent, or even hostile could not do so any longer, when they heard that there was a recognised Prince, a recognised High Priest, a recognised prophet in the land, and that all these had so far united as to form an orderly government, and build a Temple. Patriotic instincts were awakened. Zechariah hears of the deputation who had come, and immediately meets them for the purpose of assuring them that the favour of God was resting once again upon their great High Priest, and that he as an accepted branch of Aaron's house was flourishing. Furthermore he points out that Zerubbabel and Joshua were thoroughly in harmony—the counsel of peace was between them both. In token of this happy condition of affairs four memorial crowns are made, each member of the deputation taking one back with him, the fourth remaining in the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, who had so kindly received the deputation. They go back with a cordial invitation to others to join them in finishing the Temple. Some may at that time have accepted this invitation, but it was forty years nearly before any considerable number returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra (479 B.C.).

Another deputation in the same year raised the question of continuing the fasts kept in memory of Jerusalem's dark days. Two Jews bearing foreign names came from Bethel to ask concerning this matter. For it seemed indeed an anomalous thing that fasts should be observed when the city was rebuilding. But, when the question is propounded before the prophet he sees much more in the matter than this. He sees that even in the days of fasting there was no real amendment of life, no real turning from sinful ways. If fasting were to be of any value it must be on such lines as this, according to Isaiah's teaching. Had those who fasted truly understood why they did so, some good results might have followed. As it was they were keeping up not only something anomalous, but something wholly useless. A true fast would have brought men to their knees not with lamentation over misfortune merely, but with confession of sin ; it would have caused them to return to God, and find in Him a gracious supply. Having thus earnestly pointed out the path of duty, the prophet enters upon bright and hopeful delineations of the coming joy and prosperity of Jerusalem, when righteousness shall prevail within her borders, and the evil things, that God hates, are for ever abandoned. Then the days in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months which had been associated with such dark and sad events in their national history, shall be days of complete rejoicing. The former things shall be forgotten. The fast days shall be feast days. Then many shall gladly join themselves to the people of God. They will hear in every place of the good things, which God had done for them, and the surest method of national increase will be an ever-spreading testimony on the part of the people to the character of Jehovah, their God.

Nearly one century passes away between the last words of Zechariah, and the appearance of Malachi, the last canonical prophet. Many authorities place the prophecy of Joel in this century, so as to make continuous the stream of prophetic teaching. The Temple had been finished, but moments of religious indifference, and times of external embarrassment from enemies in the land occurred to interfere with the due discharge of the required observances. A great amount of harm had been done too by a terrible locust plague, so that harvests had been greatly destroyed. In all these Joel sees signs of divine disapproval, and because of this, addresses an urgent call to repentance. He summoned a great convocation of the nation, and was instrumental in bringing about a better spirit and attitude towards God. Contemporary with Joel, Ezra the scribe must have lived. The new impetus given by Joel's preaching may very well have resulted in the new vigour imparted to all the activities of the national life by the arrival of Ezra with a large following of exiles, and with royal commissions. Xerxes had pursued his great Greek campaign made ever memorable in the world's history by the remarkable battles fought at Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Salamis, which gave token that the future world-powers would arise in the West, and closed his reign in the year 465 B.C. He was succeeded by Artaxerxes. The annals of the Jews in the Captivity contain about this time the interesting story of Esther, and her promotion to be a royal consort, so opportunely to prevent a massacre of her people. The policy of Xerxes had not been friendly to the Jews, and every effort had doubtless been made to send them to their own land. But the cruel measures favoured by Haman were not popular in Susa, and Esther's influence at the court over the

capricious Xerxes was such that the policy was altered. When Artaxerxes became king we find that Jews were held in high honour at the royal court. Ezra was a recognised leader among the literary Jews, and Nehemiah held high office of a trustworthy and responsible kind near the person of the king. In 458 B.C., seven years after Artaxerxes became king, a third royal edict is issued in favour of the Jews. Ezra returns to Jerusalem with the Law, which had been carefully codified and reduced to its final form, and with the gifts of the people as well as with commission to levy rates for the maintenance of the Temple worship, and authority from the king to administer justice. He had also a very influential company,—1,500 males being mentioned according to their houses. Immediately on his arrival in Jerusalem Ezra with his great zeal for ceremonial observances found to his intense sorrow a very unhappy condition of affairs in the city. He saw that the holy seed had not kept themselves separated from the people occupying the land. This grieved him much, and he laid the matter before God in prayer. The result was a covenant into which all entered, that this union of Jews with mixed peoples should cease. It was a widespread evil and was found even in the family of Joshua the High Priest. What a long black list had Ezra to deal with, but he went about the work with persistent resolution. All this, however, had delayed the building of the city, and demoralised its inhabitants. Hence the news that reached Nehemiah in Susa were heart-rending to so true a patriot. After thirteen years he felt he could delay no longer. Thus in 445 B.C., the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, we find him making request to his royal master for permission to return to his native land, that he might rebuild "the city, the place

of his fathers' sepulchres." The arrival of one desiring the welfare of the Children of Israel grieved Sanballat and the other authorities in the land, who had tried to secure the supremacy over Jerusalem for themselves. The patriotism and enthusiasm of Nehemiah had a mighty effect. Eliashib the High Priest, the grandson of Joshua, was moved to action, and the example of the high priestly family proved contagious—every family rose up and built the part of the wall next to themselves. Notwithstanding the scorn of Sanballat the work was done, for "the people had a mind to work." When the wall was completed a great amount of internal reform had to be undertaken. The words of Zechariah had been thus largely fulfilled; others had come and finished the wall and the city. It now remained to purify the people, and remove from their midst the evils of usury, and the practices of the land favoured by Sanballat. This being done Ezra held a convocation, and read the Law in the hearing of the people. When they became aware of what the Law of their God required, they at once make public confession of their national sins, celebrate the great feast of Tabernacles, and give in their adhesion to a solemn covenant that they would "walk in God's Law, and observe and do all the commandments of the Lord, and His judgments and His statutes." Nehemiah must have been made glad by the measure of success which crowned his efforts, but he required all his firmness, and force to hold his own against evil customs. There is something pathetic in the way in which this good and earnest man tells us how he had to use personal violence, and chase high-placed men away from him, because of their favouring mixed marriages. We listen with deepest sympathy to his prayer, "Remember me, O my God for good." The removal of Nehemiah's strong

personality, and influence was a sad day for Jerusalem, and very soon we hear most serious charges brought against priest and people by the last canonical prophet. The year of Nehemiah's success was 444 B.C.—the time of Malachi's appearance is about 430 B.C., some brief fourteen years thereafter.

Nothing is known about the person or family of this prophet. His very individuality, and name seem almost swallowed up in his official title—Malachi, meaning "My messenger." The message opens in earnest pleading tones. Israel is reminded of the divine love, which had ever been yearning, and watching over them; their ingratitude and forgetfulness are rebuked. The imperfection of Israel's service is pointed out with sadness as not being a service worthy of their position. Due honour had not been given to the sacrifices required by the Law—anything was supposed good enough for them, whereas God always claims, and is entitled to the very best. The prophet declares that God's Name is more held in reverence among the nations, than among those to whom He had specially revealed Himself, and for whom He had done such great things in the past. Malachi's great complaint was with the priests, the responsible religious guides of the people. The order of Levi had grievously failed to carry out the divine purpose. The ideal priesthood is described, and the contrast is drawn between this, and that now found in Jerusalem. Severest judgment must fall on the priests, unless they take warning in time, and amend their ways. The matter of mixed marriages, which so occupied the energy and thought of Ezra and Nehemiah, still calls for dealing at the hand of the prophet. He felt that these mixed marriages were a distinct breach of the covenant between Jehovah, and

Israel, whereby this people were to be a separate people, a possession for Jehovah. It would seem that the conduct of Abraham in having more wives than one was quoted as justifying these mixed marriages. In answer the prophet declared that Abraham had a pure and lofty motive—that in spirit he was unselfish, and disinterested; he sought a godly seed at a very special juncture in the history of the world. Thus a special plea could be set up for Abraham, which could never be pled again. To the prophet marriage is a sacred thing, and divorce is regarded as alien to the mind of God. What men should always seek to cultivate is fidelity to the marriage tie, and all complications which would bring about sorrow and tears should be most strenuously resisted.

Looking at the condition of things prevailing in the land the prophet is convinced that an early and decisive judgment must come upon all the workers of iniquity. There seemed to be a singular disregard for God, and an ignoring of moral distinctions among men. Many seemed even to think that there was no God of judgment at all. The prophet knew far otherwise. He was persuaded that God must vindicate His Name, and that too in some sudden and speedy manner. The purification of His people, and the purging of the priesthood were absolutely necessary. Vain was it for men to profess allegiance to God without being holy. Declaring then the necessity of judgment, the prophet calls men to repentance. What pained him was the way in which they justified themselves, and refused to admit their sins and shortcomings. Their self-righteous spirit stood in their way. Boastful words were spoken. The providence and the wisdom of the Almighty were questioned by superficial observers. But then as ever there

was a company of earnest praying men and women, who were the salt of the earth. Few in number indeed they were, but they often met and conferred with one another about the spiritual condition of things. Their prayers and their words were all remembered by God. And the day must come—such a day is a divine necessity, and a divine appointment, when a public separation must be made between the sheep and the goats, between the righteous and the wicked. "God hath appointed a day when He shall judge the world by that Man, whom He hath ordained." Of that great final day of judgment, many days of chastisement, and punishment are signs and tokens. And before each dread day of Jehovah He in grace sends a warning messenger; He never cuts down an individual or a nation without warning full and complete. Blessed ears are those which are ever open to divine instruction.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Apocalypse of Daniel (168-164 B.C.).

As we have continually seen, and have frequently had occasion to remark, the function of prophets in Israel was the declaration of the mind and will of God to their own generation, and the interpretation of history as governed by divine principles for the good of God's own people. Malachi is regarded as the last of the regular order of prophets indeed, but God must always have in each successive age a witness unto Himself, whatever method He may adopt. That portion of "Daniel," which now falls to be considered deals with the history of the time, in which

the author lived, as an unfolding of a divine programme. This is done by way of vision or apocalypse, for the special purpose of bringing comfort to the Jews, while suffering cruel persecution at the hand of Antiochus Epiphanes. The first portion of "Daniel" already considered was occupied with the times of the Babylonian captivity. This second portion is occupied also with times of severe trial and oppression, and agrees with the first in showing that God rules over all earthly things, and brings about His people's deliverance from every trouble. The first apocalypse before us sets forth the course of the four great Empires that rose and fell between the Captivity (586 B.C.), and the time of the writer (168 B.C.). They are set before us as the kingdoms of gold, silver, brass and iron, forming the great heathen Colossus seen in vision. The four Empires are manifestly these:—(1) The Babylonian; (2) The Median; (3) The Persian; (4) The Macedonian. No difficulty exists as to the interpretation of the first, for we are distinctly told that Nebuchadrezzar was the head of gold. More uncertainty exists as to the identification of the second kingdom, but attention to the circumstances of history, and the whole manner in which Media is spoken of in this book warrants the conclusion, that the prophetic writer meant to refer here to this kingdom. The third kingdom is clearly Persia, while the fourth is that of Alexander, which on his decease proved itself to be of a somewhat heterogeneous character. History tells us about the break up of the Macedonian Empire into four parts on the death of its mighty founder. With two of these kingdoms, ruled over by the Diadochi or successors of Alexander, the writer had chief concern, as we shall immediately see. They are the kingdoms respectively of Syria and Egypt, governed by

the Seleucidæ, and the Ptolemies. A traditional interpretation of this dream carries its forecasting on to the time of our Lord by regarding the Macedonian Empire as the third, and the Roman Empire as the fourth. But this view is based on the principle that all prophecy is Messianic in a certain sense, viz. : this sense, that it points forward to detailed historical circumstances in the time of Christ. We believe that all prophecy is Messianic in the higher spiritual sense, viz. : that it finds its sublimest, and completest fulfilment in the Christian era. But the dream before us seems to bring history down to a very clearly defined date. The stone cut out of the mountains by the direct working of God, for no human hands seemed sufficient of themselves to bring about this result—this stone represents the revived kingdom of the Jews. From the time of Malachi the course of Jewish history ran on quietly so far as external world-powers were concerned. The great world movement went on, as it were, entirely on the outside of Jewish life. The Jew was an interested party, but an inactive spectator of the rise of the Macedonian power on the ruins of the Athenian and Spartan supremacies, and its ultimate success in the displacing of the Persian Empire by Alexander when at Issus (333 B.C.) he defeated Darius. This great conqueror simply looked at Jerusalem, and passed on his way. The growth of Antioch, on the Orontes, was an event of more importance for Jerusalem, for this new city soon became the centre of vast trade, and the capital of a kingdom that was to treat Judea with great cruelty. Seleucus, to whom Syria fell, reigned from 312 to 280 B.C., and his kingdom became a proud and boastful horn, "speaking great things." He was the founder of Antioch (307 B.C.), which he called after his father Antiochus, one of the generals of Alexander.

The first dream assigned to Daniel himself represents the four empires of which we have been speaking as four great all-devouring beasts of prey. Babylon is the lion with eagle's wings. This figure was common enough on the walls and buildings of Babylon, and fitly designates this Empire. The plucking of the soaring pinions, and the giving of a human heart indicates the moment, when Nebuchadrezzar was humbled and recognised God as supreme. The second kingdom represented by the bear is Media, with its three-fold division into satrapies. Then Persia is leopard or panther-like with its four-fold divisions of the known world, Persia, Media, Babylonia, and Egypt. Over the Persian Empire there ruled after Cyrus four great Emperors, viz.: Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes as important heads, the reign of Smerdis hardly reckoning at all. Lastly, the seer beholds the mighty power of Alexander devouring everything. This kingdom is not represented by any one beast. It was a new power, not of Asiatic origin, though ultimately behaving in Asiatic fashion. The immediate outcome of this Empire, so far as the Jews were concerned, was the kingdom of the Seleucidæ already referred to as established in Antioch, and having ten horns or kings from 312 B.C. to 175 B.C. Closer attention to the history of this kingdom reveals the sudden rise in the latter year of a little horn, viz.: Antiochus Epiphanes, who overthrew three of the horns belonging to this dynasty and seized upon the throne. Seleucus Philopator who had given his sister Cleopatra to be wife of Ptolemy king of Egypt was murdered in 176 B.C., and a period of uncertainty ensued. This was ended by Antiochus, the second son of Antiochus the great, becoming king. This was he, who had "the mouth speaking great things." The oppressive

and cruel rule of this king was followed by a divine interposition on behalf of Jerusalem. This is represented as a great judgment upon the heathen powers, in which Jehovah reveals Himself in glory surrounded by His attendant angels, and ten thousand times ten thousand Saints. Such a blasphemous boast, such cruel oppression against the saints of God was bound to bring a speedy and decisive punishment. And this is what the prophet saw accomplished. For Antiochus perished disgracefully and suddenly in 164 B.C. A full and graphic account of the painful sufferings of this king is given in the second book of the Maccabees (Ch. ix. 5). He was smitten with an incurable and internal disease. His end in such circumstances may be compared with that of Herod (Acts xii. 23). Such dreadful visitations come upon those in every age who dishonour God, and use their high and lofty stations for base and ignoble ends. Every age sees the judgment set, and the books opened against such men. Each successive judgment is surely anticipatory of the final day with its dread assize, and warning sufficient for all who read history aright. All earthly kingdoms based on might and self-aggrandisement shall miserably perish; only that which is ruled over by a Son of man, and pervaded in its every part by His Spirit shall endure for ever. This kingdom is a divine gift from Him who is the Ancient of Days. What a contrast is this that is here drawn between a wild animal style of kingdom resulting in devastation and sorrow, and a human, humane kingdom based on righteousness, which ever makes for peace and with which God is well pleased!

In the interpretation of this vision a very full and detailed account is given of the cruel doings of Antiochus Epiphanes, but to this we shall have to give attention in

our next chapter, which we shall devote to a treatment of the last week of suffering (174-168 B.C.) when every effort was made to wear out the saints of the Most High, and to change the sacred feasts, and cherished institutions of this people. After this week of suffering these saints of God, *i.e.*, the Holy people, recovered their position and independence. Once again in Jerusalem the Temple was purified, and divine service was carried on (165 B.C.).

The second vision brings Alexander the Great again before us, goat-like pushing his conquests in every direction, and overthrowing the ram-like power of Persia with its two horns, Media and Persia. The Macedonian power is appropriately represented here by a goat, as the term is also used to describe it in Greek history. The Macedonians were called the goat people (Aegeadæ), and they had a goat for their ensign. Four horns sprung out of this goat-power, and these represent Alexander's four generals, who divided his empire among themselves, viz. : Lysimachus, Cassander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. From Seleucus descended Antiochus, as we have seen, the oppressor of the chosen land in which God had taken pleasure. This was the little horn that cast down the truth to the ground, and prospered for a while. Both these visions gather round the same anxious period. The deep anguish of mind and spirit felt by the prophetic writer was typical of what all felt in these dark and gloomy days. But then, as ever, "the darkest moment was the moment just before the dawn."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Prophetic Waiting on God. The Seventy Weeks Explained.

When the Jews returned to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. an important date in their history had truly been reached. The Babylonian Captivity had in substance ended, and Restoration to the land, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had foretold, had in large measure been brought about. But troublous times prevailed, and pious men were asking themselves about the meaning of the seventy years spoken of by the prophets. It did not seem as if the desolation had come to an end in exactly seventy years—much yet seemed to remain of oppression and sorrow. The promises, so exceedingly full of comfort, had met with only a scanty measure of realization, far short apparently of what should have been the case. Men then failed to see that divine promises always contain a spiritual and ideal element, which cannot possibly find a fulfilment in earthly and temporal conditions. From failing to realize this, men still find themselves unable to interpret prophecy aright, and in all sorts of fanciful ways seek for time and place fulfilments for promise and prophecy that are too large for any earthly embodiment. The portion of prophecy now before us shows us an earnest spirit of enquiry, as to times and seasons, but at the same time what is very much better, an attitude of humble dependence on God, and of true self-abasement. The writer is truly conscious of sin, and national wrong doing, and he can see in all this sufficient cause for the continuance of troublous times,

and days of chastisement. He pours out his spirit in most earnest supplication, pleading with Almighty God, that the period of desolation may fully and entirely come to an end—that long weary time, during which the secular world-power had held dominion more or less complete over His own people.

In answer to this prayer, so beautiful and so pathetic, the prophet receives from an angel of God the explanation of the duration of desolation, an explanation that gave him the comfort needed by himself and by his suffering people. If we could place ourselves in the circumstances of the time when this explanation was given, we would find this at any rate—a people longing for something just like this to allay their fears, and give them peace of mind. And by giving this explanation in God's Name the writer performed the duty of a true prophet of Jehovah. He spoke comfortably to Jerusalem. He told them that their time of trial was nearly over.

His explanation is based on Jeremiah's period of seventy years—a period, which is now regarded as being that of seventy weeks, a year being taken symbolically for a year-week. Jeremiah gave his great prophecy of restoration in the year 588 B.C., and just on the eve of the fall of Jerusalem. This must, therefore, date the beginning of our period, or the *terminus a quo* for our calculation. Reckoning the seventy-year weeks as equal to 420 years (a full week being seven days, but a working week being six days) this brings us down to 168 B.C., the exact year when the desolation reached its limit and its end, and the abomination was set up by Antiochus in the Temple. It has usually been thought that the period here referred to was that extending from about 445 B.C. to the time of Christ, but apart from

the difficulty of making the dates harmonize, it seems wholly beside the mark to make this passage apply to a time so very far in the future. The prophet tells us of a limit to desolation, which was to be found in the actual experience of his own generation. The punishment of the sin of Jerusalem was now to come to an end, and a beginning of better and brighter days was to dawn, when vision and prophecy were to be ratified, and the Most Holy Place anointed. The year 168 B.C. satisfies these conditions. A detailed examination of the passage points in the same direction. The first period of seven weeks, or forty-two years, extends from 588-546 B.C. when the forty years' captivity of Judah ended (586-546 B.C.) (Ezek. iv. 6), as also the one hundred and ninety years' captivity of Israel (736-546 B.C.), and this was the year when Cyrus, the anointed servant of Jehovah, was being recognised as Israel's deliverer, and the coming conqueror of Babylon. From 546 to 174 B.C. we have the sixty-two weeks, or 372 years, in which city and wall were being rebuilt, and the year 174 B.C. brings us to a crisis in the history of Jerusalem, when Antiochus formed a treaty with the Hellenizing Jews, in consequence of which Onias the High Priest, the anointed one, was cut off leaving no legal successor. The last week begins in 174 and ends in 168 B.C., when the city was invaded, the Temple sacrifice caused to stop, and every sort of cruelty and abomination perpetrated in the city and Temple. Here then is the period, and the appointed end of the period, to which the visions of the prophet pointed so clearly and emphatically. The seventy weeks thus determined the prophetic writer finds to cover the whole period of desolation and trouble extending from 588 to 168 B.C., when immediately the Maccabees unfurled the

national flag, and came forth from Modein to claim Jerusalem for Jehovah, and to drive back the blasphemous invader, and his generals. Those who had entered into treaty with him had proved themselves traitors to all their best traditions, and surely they must have felt this when in 171 B.C., and for three years thereafter the Temple service was interfered with. Our prophet had spoken of this week of suffering in terms of days already, reckoning 2300 days from the time when the Temple service ceased to the glad day of the cleansing of the Sanctuary. This period is either 174-168 B.C., or 171-165 B.C.; 168 B.C. being the end of the last week of suffering, and 165 B.C. being the actual year, in which the Temple was rededicated. This interesting period is also spoken of as a time, times, and half a time, *i.e.*, three and a half years.

Now we gather that some days were to elapse between the visions of the writer, and this joyful event; for this the faithful were to wait in calm assurance. The prophet himself is strengthened by an angelic ministry, even as was our Lord after His temptation. Every nation was supposed at that time to have its own guardian angel or spirit. Michael was for Israel. He had been restrained by the supremacy of Persia, and hindered by Greece, but now he is speedily going to give Israel rest. Reference is again made to the great campaigns of Xerxes against Greece, to the appearance of Alexander, and the subdivision of his Empire among men, who had no blood-relation to him. After this a detailed statement is given of the affairs of the two kingdoms, whose rivalries so intimately affected Jerusalem, viz:—Syria and Egypt, the one being described as the kingdom of the north, the latter as the kingdom of the south. The treaty entered into between

Antiochus II. in 249 B.C. when he married Berenice the daughter of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, is spoken of as bringing about no real friendship between the rival powers. To avenge the cruel treatment of this Egyptian princess her brother, Ptolemy Euergetes, invaded Syria (247 B.C.) and had a measure of success. About this time military adventurers from Judea joined with Syria against Egypt. Some years of peace then followed, then petty warfare, until in 223 B.C. Antiochus III. called the Great, became king of Syria. He was an ambitious ruler with great projects both against Egypt and Rome. He was, however, largely unsuccessful, a Roman general defeating him in the great battle of Magnesia (189 B.C.). This was one of the decisive conflicts of the world's history, which gave token that another World-Empire, even that of Rome, was now in the ascendant. Antiochus III. died suddenly, while he was plundering the temple of Elymais in Persia. Seleucus Philopator reigned next, but was assassinated in 175 B.C. after a rule of some ten years. Then Antiochus IV., surnamed by his flatterers Epiphanes (the illustrious), but more properly Epimanes (the madman) became king. Our writer can hardly refer to him calmly. He is called a contemptible person—one that came in unawares, and without right or merit obtained the throne by flattery and deceit. This was the king, who gained such influence over very many in Jerusalem by a lavish display and distribution of gifts. He secured power also in Egypt by craft and diplomacy, hoping to maintain his throne by a friendly alliance with Ptolemy Philometor (181-146 B.C.). This policy, however, proved of no avail; it was the divine will that a limit should be placed upon the ambition of Antiochus. The Roman fleet also under Popilius the commander checked his progress in the South.

Hindered thus he turned his wrath in full tide against Jerusalem carrying things there with a high hand, and proving again the old adage, that the gods first drive mad those they mean to destroy. The crisis was fast approaching, and when this king behaved with such utter disregard for the religious feelings of the Jews as to commit sacrilege in the Temple itself, by erecting an altar to Jupiter Olympius in the most Holy Place, the worm Jacob was bound to turn. Stunned by these enormities the people seemed for a moment to stand still, but soon they recovered themselves. The two Books of the Maccabees tell us what these enormities were—the horror of them to a pious Jew was beyond all endurance (Book II., ch. vi.). Brave Judas the Maccabee rallied the faithful, and victory soon crowned his endeavours. He placed his confidence not in weapons and human might, but in the Almighty. Nicanor, the Syrian general, fled before him. But Demetrius turned the tide of war for a season against the Jews until Jonathan and Simon finished the campaigns. Jerusalem was then purified, and soon after (164 B.C.) Antiochus died.

How long did this final period of anxiety last? This is the last question propounded in our prophecy. The answer given is a time, times, and a half, *i.e.*, 1 year, 2 years, and $\frac{1}{2}$ year $= 3\frac{1}{2}$ years. And further on this period is described as 1290 days, also about the same time. This was the time of testing discipline, lasting as it did from 168 to 165 B.C. But for the complete end of everything the faithful are exhorted to wait forty-five days more. Some time would be required after the dedication of the altar to Jehovah once again, for the restitution of all things. Good government had to be restored. Claims would have to be examined. Hence great patience would have to be exercised. The faithful

must be in no hurry. They must do their duty calmly and without fretting, believing that all that is their due will be given to them at the end of the days. How wise is this conclusion! Only let men believe in God, and know that vengeance belongeth unto Him. He will repay. To His own people He giveth all good, but the wicked will He utterly destroy.

*Note.*—Of the passage Dan. ix. 24-27 it has been said by our latest authority that "no entirely satisfactory interpretation appears yet to have been found,"—but there is general agreement among most competent critics that the close of the period is identical with that of the last days of Antiochus. The suggestion made here—that the week may mean a week generally, a working week of six days—seems appropriate as a form of representation that might have been adopted by a pious Jew. Our own common use in popular speech may also be referred to. On this suggestion the dates tally, and this they do on no other.

# DIVISION III.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Ruling Religious Conceptions of the Post-Exilian Period.

With the prophetic writings in this volume we reach the closing and most deeply interesting period in the history of God's ancient people, so far at least as our canon is concerned. Now also we meet with the highest product of their religious and prophetic thought. From Amos to "Daniel" runs the period of prophetic activity, and at every stage of this development there is a more clear and emphatic representation, not indeed perhaps of new truth, but certainly of new aspects of the old truth. After "Daniel" pure prophetic and immediate inspiration ceases. The apocryphal literature is mediate and reflective. The moment of exile was important supremely as a moment of complete detachment from all outward forms, and modes of worship. Use and wont were overthrown. Temple and sacrifice ceased. Of necessity the pious had to feel their attachment to spiritual realities in a way they could never have done before. They learned to grasp the substance as the old form was destroyed. God now became more and more recognised as the Temple Himself, and it was seen that He could dwell in devout hearts, while the sacrifices

that were felt to be pleasing to Him were those of "a broken spirit—a broken and a contrite heart." Prayer now has a more genuine place in worship, as we can see in the successive prophets of our period; in "Daniel" prayer occupies the most prominent place.

Jeremiah had lived in the time of storm and stress. His main work was to show that spiritual religion was an abiding heritage of the believing individual. He urged that religion was broad based on the heart of man, wherein God wrote His law. Such religion could survive the wreck of the dearest outward guarantees of worship. In exile indeed, but in much quieter days Ezekiel declared the worth of the righteous man. He forecasted the new Israel. That new Israel now lives and moves before us in the pages of this volume. The effects of the seventy years' captivity were immense, and a people who had been sown and scattered among the nations, because of their idolatry and departure from God, are now by severest discipline weaned from these old sinful ways, and made ready to return. Jeremiah had foretold that they would be punished in measure, and not wholly cut off. Doubtless they had received a severer form of retribution than Jeremiah had thought of. Yea, they had received double for all their sins, and their heathen conquerors exulted over them, as they oppressed their old men, and mocked their sacred psalms.

Worthier and more spiritual views of Jehovah, as the God of Israel, were now being held and taught. What a contrast does the resolute adhesion given to the Queen of Heaven by those Jews, who went down to Egypt, present to the attitude of the returning Jews towards one Supreme God. Jehovah is always spoken of now as the deliverer and

redeemer and saviour of Israel. This usage is striking, but most natural when God is seen returning the captivity of Zion. Thirteen times is He called Redeemer—seven times is He called Saviour, words now so dear to us; but the word Redeemer is only found thrice, and the word Saviour twice elsewhere in the O.T. But more particular importance should be given to the description of Jehovah as the Holy One of Israel, dwelling in their midst. This is peculiar to the two divisions of Isaiah, being found sixteen times in Isa. i. to xxxix, sixteen times in Isa. xl. to lxvi., while only four other times elsewhere. The ascription of righteousness to God is distinctive of this period too, the six times of Jeremiah contrasting with the thirty-six times of II. Isaiah, and the seventy times of the later Psalms. God is seen to be essentially Holiness, and righteousness is recognised as the outcome and expression of His being. The more tender and gracious sides of the divine excellence as Husband, Father, Mother are dwelt upon, and all this in manifest contrast to the rude idolatrous incarnations of might and power seen all around in Babylon. While supreme contempt is shown for these, all nations are called upon to reverence Jehovah as the Creator and moral Governor of the universe, as the First and the Last, above and before all things. This God acts for His own glory, brings His own revealed purposes to pass, as He knows all things from their beginnings, and thus again stands in opposition to the heathen gods, which are carried by their supporters, and all the oracles of which are ambiguous and perplexing. The greatest kings of the earth are His servants to accomplish His purpose. This seemed strange doctrine to many, but is regarded as indisputable. The final goal of God is righteousness, and the chief end of

Israel, as of the nations, is the recognition of God, as victorious over all wrong, and ever vindicating Himself by interposition for the establishment of the right.

Alongside of this more general aspect of the divine character we have a firm realization of the divine purpose as concerned with the deliverance and restoration of Israel. Human agents like Nebuchadrezzar and Cyrus are anointed and used in relation to this people, that so this people which had been formed for God's glory, chosen, redeemed, preserved might maintain and spread true religion in earth's most distant place. Israel is regarded as a witnessing people, a nation of priests, a people for God's own possession, that so His glory might be made known through them. They are to be the Servants of Jehovah, and thus the centre of true religion for the world. All nations, and all nature are to be blessed through them. National and physical disqualification and impediments lose their importance. Moral requirements, and Sabbath keeping are emphasized. Pardon is seen to be God's grand prerogative, while sin must bring its own retribution in excluding man from truest beatitude.

In II. Isaiah we trace a distinct development in the working out of the idea of the servant of Jehovah from its general application to the people as a whole, towards the kernel, or remnant of the pious few in Israel, nay, towards some more individual embodiment of the true servant, who would be in perfect touch with God, and in actual, active sympathy with the very highest form of human life, as exemplified by complete self-sacrifice for others. But to the prophet it is the redeemed, and disciplined people of God, who are to do God's work—their call being to service. By them, and through what they suffer, not only the whole

people, but other nations also are blessed. The servant of Jehovah is the company of ear and eye opened men and women, who are devoted to God's will. The truth that the just suffer for the unjust, which had perplexed many, is now recognised as the highest law of the divine life, to become incarnate in the Son of Man. Service rather than sonship is however the prophetic ideal as yet. The harmonizing of sonship and service came later with the Servant, who was also the Son.

The prophecies under consideration being so entirely occupied with practical issues in the time so near, much attention is not given to the delineation of a future deliverer. The Messianic Hope at this time assumes its own special form. It is not so much a royal and kingly one that is expected, but rather a royal and priestly people, who are to work out God's plan. Brightest visions are entertained not for a far distant future, but for the days after Restoration. These would be not the world's last days, but the succeeding days, the days of the perfect fulfilment in nature, and in grace of the divine promises. Not earth's closing epoch, but earth's glorified form when the true, normal state of things should come to exist, and Eden be restored. The continuity of a restored people, with whom a divine covenant of unalterable character is made, in the conditions of divine favour—this is the bright future of Israel, and in this sense everlastingness, and immortality are taught, even as a blessing for the nation. The last sections of "Daniel" speak of resurrection, only however of the good in Israel. A rich belief such as Christ gave, when He "brought life and immortality to light," is doubtless involved in the idea of life in covenant and fellowship with God, but it was as yet undeveloped. A blessed "hereafter" was not yet

taught, but the entire destruction of the wicked out of the land is declared, and the forgetting of their very name while their sufferings remain as a warning.

Passing with the restored people into the land we find Haggai and Zechariah trying to make good the Isaianic prophecies. Their task was difficult. The real is always harder to work with than the ideal. Facts are ever stubborn. These prophets saw much to discourage, and required to use great urgency to press for a nearer conformity to Isaiah's programme. They held firmly to faith in Israel's God, and so never lost hope for God's Israel. The slow progress in Temple building, even though the adversaries were many, was traced to failure in the spiritual life, and the undue concern for individual interests. A call to moral amendment like that of Jeremiah, in his first appearances, is again heard. If only the people would be faithful to God, what great things God could do for them! This Zechariah saw in his visions. These clearly teach the truths of a controlling providence, Jerusalem's bright sinless future, and the recognition of an anointed king and priest, notwithstanding every adversary. In his teaching as to Fasts, and the future, Zechariah emphasizes the moral requirement of Jehovah. Mention is hardly at all made of ceremonial observances. To the new Jerusalem men were to be attracted by the manifest power of the fact that God shall be seen dwelling in the midst of her. But the last prophetic voice is pathetic in its complaint. God had been robbed; only the few remember His Name, and speak often one to another. Yet God's Name is great among all nations. Israel has not realized the high prophetic hope. The day of judgment must again come. A warning voice shall, however, be heard before that day shall

come. The true preparation for this day is a heart changing such as was wrought by Elijah the prophet in the olden days. A spiritual testing and reformation is seen to be necessary. In the closing chapters of "Daniel" a firm belief in the divine providence as interested in Israel is clearly shown. It was a matter of conviction that God was discerning between the wicked and the good, caring for His people by bringing to them an issue out of all their troubles, while punishing the proud. A doctrine of angels is beginning to appear—these being the divine executive charged with obedience to His commands. The hope of resurrection, too, is taking more definite shape, but with that much has to be done before the joy and brightness of the Christian hope could be reached.

Thus we have a fuller and clearer representation given to us by these prophets of all that was involved in the grand thought of Jehovah's relationship to Israel. A firmer grasp of this, and the clearer appreciation of it as a Fatherly relationship to men—this was to give the last and supreme prophetic revelation as to what God is, in and for His people. It was just because Christ gave all this that He satisfied and satisfies man's deepest longings, crowning all preceding revelations, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

## CHAPTER II.

### A Chronological Table.

| B.C. | |
|---|---|
| 588. | Jeremiah's prophecy of Restoration. |
| 586. | The destruction of Jerusalem. |
| 585. | The Battle at the Halys. Triple alliance formed. |
| 581. | Nebuchadrezzar invades Egypt. |
| 572. | Amasis reigns. |
| 572. | Ezekiel's last prophecy. |
| 561. | Death of Nebuchadrezzar and Jeremiah. |
| 554. | Nabunahid begins to reign. |
| 549. | Defeat of Astyages of Media by Cyrus. |
| 546. | End of "seven weeks" of Daniel. |
| 546. | Cyrus attacks Babylon unsuccessfully. |
| 544. | Sardis captured. |
| 538. | Babylon taken. Influence of Daniel. |
| 536. | Edict of Restoration granted. |
| 529. | Death of Cyrus. Cambyses succeeds. |
| 522-486. | Reign of Darius. |
| 520. | Zechariah's Visions. |
| 516. | Second Temple dedicated. |
| 486-465. | Xerxes reigns. Time of Esther. |
| 490. | Battle of Marathon. |
| 480. | ,, Salamis. |
| 458. | Second Return of Jews under Ezra. |
| 445. | Mission of Nehemiah. |
| 430. | Prophecy of Malachi. |
| 333. | Rise of Macedonian Empire. |
| 312. | Seleucus first king of Antioch. |
| 189. | Battle of Magnesia. Rome victorious. |
| 176. | Antiochus Epiphanes reigns. |
| 168. | Abomination of desolation set up. |
| 165. | The Temple purified. Triumph of the Maccabees. |
| 164. | Death of Antiochus. |

## CHAPTER III.

### Glossary of Names and Notes.

*(Arranged as they occur in the text.)*

(Pp. 9-19.)

**Zion.** This mount on which David's city stood is here either (1) addressed as in the A.V., or (2) regarded, as we prefer to take it, as the destination to which the good news of deliverance are brought.

**Jehovah.** This sacred name is the name of the God of Israel. In xl. 10 the LXX. repeat the Greek equivalent twice, and thus we render it.

**The Right** and **Righteousness.** These are characteristic words in the portion before us, being used at least thirty-six times in reference to God, as acting according to the law or norm of His Being.

**Coastlands,** or sea-washed continents. The reference is not to islands but to the great continents of which only the fringe was known through maritime enterprise.

**The Holy One.** This is a distinctive name of Jehovah now. It is used only six times before I. Isaiah; fourteen times there, and sixteen times in II. Isaiah. It indicates the Divine Essence, as now understood.

**The North.** From this quarter the Holy land was chiefly invaded. Syria, Assyria, Babylon, all came thus. Now Cyrus is assailing Babylon from the north, having moved round from the east where in Anzan his family rose.

**Called by name.** The Heb. text which makes Cyrus call upon Jehovah's Name (and which led to a belief that he in some way honoured the God of Israel—a belief nowhere proved) is here emended slightly to emphasize the truth that God had called Cyrus by name to do His will. See also page 27, last line.

**Wilderness.** The Arabian wilderness contiguous on the South to Palestine.

**Kedar,** a chief Arabian tribe.

**Sela.** The rock city or fortress of Nabatæa in Edom.

**Devoted.** The reading adopted means surrendered to God, and is found in the word Muslim, by which the Mahomedans designate themselves.

**Egypt** with Ethiopia and Seba had been handed over to the wrath of Nebuchadrezzar, and thus suffered what otherwise might have fallen

(Pp. 20-36.)

on Israel. Cambyses the successor of Cyrus likewise conquered, and thoroughly subjugated Egypt.

**Their delight.** Text difficult. Passage in LXX. indicates that the Chaldæans will now flee in fear, using their pleasure boats as a means of escape.

**Jeshurun.** An endearing name for Israel. Derived perhaps from Jasher "the upright one."

**Cyrus** appeared first in Elam, and had Susa for his capital. His earliest campaign was against Media, where in 549 he was victorious. In 546 he first threatened Babylon, but had to turn his energies against Lydia (545-540), and Croesus. He had married the daughter of Cyaxares, his uncle, the reigning sovereign in Ecbatana. He commanded Median and Persian troops as regent or joint sovereign, and did not assume title of sole sovereign till the death of Cyaxares II. in 536 B.C. This Cyaxares would be the Median king who received the capitulation of Babylon. Cyrus died in 529 when Cambyses succeeded to the throne. The large amount of ignorance that prevailed about Cyrus led to the glorification of his character. Recent discoveries are dissipating this ignorance.

**Sabæans,** a people in southern portion of Ethiopia. Seba = Meroe.

**Bel,** one of the chief deities of Babylon, with his wife Beltis. His temple in ancient Babylon was a magnificent one. The old hymn says, "O Bel, Babylon is thy dwelling." The name of this deity is often found in combination with royal names, *e.g.*, Belshazzar.

**Nebo** was another deity, the God of the planet Mercury. He was the "Lord of Tablets," and the Lofty Intelligence, the author and source of understanding. This name is found in Nebuchadrezzar.

**Eagle.** A warlike standard, favourite with warlike peoples.

**East.** See above, under Cyrus.

**Magicians, charmers, &c.** These persons occupied a prominent place in the Babylonian Court, because of the firm-rooted belief in evil spirits and demons. Their business was to exorcise these spirits, and allay fear. Some of the formulæ of incantation are extant.

**Jehoiakim,** king of Judah from 609 to 599 B.C.

**Nebuchadrezzar,** the great king under whom Babylon rose to its highest point of renown. His reign extended from 606 to 561 B.C. His name signifies, "May Nebo protect the landmark." The forty years of this reign were a critical period for Judah.

**Vessels.** It is worthy of notice that only a part of the vessels had been preserved: the others had been melted. (See 2 Kings xxv. 13; Neh. xiii. 9.)

**Shinar** (Gen. x. 10; Zech. v. 11) = Sumer, the southern portion of Babylon, as Accad was the northern one.

(Pp. 37-52.)

**Daniel** was of royal descent, and one of the earliest captives carried to Babylon. Probably a hostage for Judah's fidelity. We must distinguish between the man, and the book ascribed to him. His recognised position is shown by Ezekiel's words (xiv. 14).

**Belteshazzar**, the Babylonian name given to Daniel. Means either (1) Beltis protects the king (Sayce), or (2) Protect thou his life (Schrader).

**Abednebo** = the servant of Nebo. More correct than Abednego.

**Twelfth year.** This is a suggested emendation for the second year, and would be a more suitable date than 605 when the king was in full vigour and very active.

**Aramaic.** The book of Daniel has the portion ii. 4 to vii. in this language, *i.e.*, Aramaic. The narrative pieces are appropriately in this style, while the prophetic portions are later Hebrew.

**Dura**, a district of Babylon mentioned as Duru in a geographical list.

**Psaltery.** Importance is attached to the mention of this instrument, as showing that the book of Daniel must have been written after the time of Alexander the Great, by whose conquests Greek civilization had been spread.

**Seven**, a sacred number. The season may be a portion of a year or a year.

**Watchers.** The doctrine of and belief in Angels were now entering more definitely into Jewish experience.

**Belshazzar**, the son of Nabunahid or Nabonidus, and probably joint sovereign with his father at the time of the fall of Babylon. His name is mentioned on a Cylinder. An inscription of Cyrus speaks of Nabunahid being at that time in seclusion at Tema, and of his son being at Accad with the chief nobles. Nabunahid had tried in vain to secure the recognition of Merodach as chief deity. When Babylon fell, doubtless a revolution arose in Accad against this unpopular dynasty, in which Belshazzar was slain.

**Ancestor** or grandfather. Nebuchadrezzar is spoken of in the A. V. as the father of Belshazzar. This, however, was not the case; the word father must be taken in a general sense as above.

**Board of Three.** The promise to make the interpreter one of the three rulers would imply that Belshazzar was the second.

**The Queen**, *i.e.*, Queen Nitocris, the wife of Nabunahid, and mother of Belshazzar. She receives the full title of sovereign here, indicating that her husband still reigned. Another word is used in Jer. xiii. 18.

**M'ne**, a measure of value, as **Tekel** is of weight.

**Darius the Mede.** The interpretation adopted here is that this really refers to the reigning Median sovereign, viz., Cyaxares II., son of Astyages, who had Cyrus for his colleague, and died 536 B.C. It would be to him as suzerain that Babylon would surrender. His age,

(Pp. 52-69.)

sixty-two, supports this view. Darius may be taken as a royal title. The silence of history about Cyaxares II. is here no argument against this view, as Cyrus was the actor at this time. (2) A second interpretation would make Darius the Mede to be Gobryas, the commander of the army under Cyrus. He may have been a deputy ruler, but the expressions used here can hardly refer to a subordinate officer. (3) A third view that Darius Hystaspes is here spoken of is strange, because he did not reign till 521, *i.e.*, seventeen years later than the capture of the city.

**The King or Emperor** according to our view would be Cyaxares II., the Median Sovereign, in whose name the government was going on. He was *de jure* sovereign, while Cyrus was so *de facto*. Darius may have been a royal title, even as Cæsar has become one in its modern forms of Tsar, Kaiser, &c.

**Religion** or law. The law of God is the principle of religion. It is a Torah or Teaching of God.

**Sinites.** Some difficulty attaches to the accurate determination of this reference. The view that Sin is China must be given up. Obviously the reference must be to some district to which the Jews had been carried captive, and from which they were now to be brought back. To China there had been as yet no *diaspora*. North and South, and probably the far East are already spoken of. This would leave the Western regions as the part where we might look for Sin. Pelusium, an Egyptian city, with its district is called Sin in Ezekiel xxx. 16. Many captives were in Egypt round about Tahpanhes and Migdol. Attention need not, however, be diverted to the discovery of exact references: the promise is that all the exiles shall be restored from every quarter to which they had been driven.

**Side.** In the East mothers carry their young children on their sides.

**Teaching** = Torah or law; see above.

**Rahab**, a poetic name for Egypt. (See Isaiah xxx. 7. Also Ps. lxxxvii. 4; and Ps. lxxxix. 10.) In Assyrian the word means a Sea-monster. The dragon or great sea-fish or crocodile of the next clause describes also the boastful dweller by the Nile. (Ps. xci. 13; Isa. xxvii. 1; Exod. vii. 9.)

**Assyria** and Egypt are here mentioned as the former cruel oppressors of Israel. They with Babylon had gone far beyond the purpose of the divine will in chastisement. They had given double what they should have given. (See Jer. xlvi. 28; Isa. xl. 1.)

**Colour.** It is an Eastern custom among women to stain or dye their faces round their eyes with antimony, a dark metallic colour (2 Kings ix. 30).

**Evil-doer.** The correct Heb. word corresponds here in meaning to the word in the first clause, wicked. This the Heb. parallelism requires.

(Pp. 70-92.)

**Covenant.** The prophet declares that the divine covenant made with the returning people is to be unfailing even as that made with David.

**Eunuch.** The kingdom of heaven is not closed against physical or national disqualifications; it is open to all who are spiritually qualified.

**Sabbaths.** Emphasis is laid on Sabbath keeping now rather than on circumcision, as a sign of the covenant. (Ezek. xx. 11; Levit. xxvi. 2.) This is a spiritual obligation.

**Valleys.** Reference is here made to the old idolatrous customs practised before the captivity in the valley of the sons of Hinnom.

**Stones** were used in divination, and casting of lots.

**Impure,** *i.e.*, ceremonially so.

**Moloch,** the false deity of the Children of Ammon, worshipped with abominable and cruel rites in Gehenna.

**Midian,** an Arabian tribe (Gen. xxv. 2). As also
**Ephah** ( ,, 4) and
**Sheba** and
**Kedar.**

**Nebaioth,** closely associated with Kedar (Gen. xxv. 13), adjoining the Edomites; probably the name survives in the later form Nabatæa.

**Eye-opening.** This passage is quoted in Luke iv. 18, and this quotation seems to imply a double reading (as in LXX.). The Hebrew words may also be read as a compound expression, and may mean complete opening.

**Edom.** The great enemy of Judah. Probably conquered by Nebuchadrezzar, when **Bozrah,** its capital, was overthrown.

**Shepherds.** In Ps. lxxvii. 20 Moses and Aaron are designated as the under shepherds of Israel. If shepherd, *i.e.*, the singular, be read the reference would be to Moses alone, Jehovah being regarded as the supreme leader.

**Long time.** Text of v. 5 in page 90 is uncertain, and various conjectures have been made for its emendation.

**City.** The Heb. singular would here be more appropriate.

**Burned.** This verse is of supreme importance for Post-exilic date.

**Gardens.** Heathen cults are here referred to, especially those that had been carried on in Jerusalem in her last evil days before the captivity.

**Roofs.** The worship of the host of heaven is here spoken of (Zephaniah i. 5; Jer. xix. 13).

**Swine's flesh.** The eating of swine's flesh was forbidden (Levit. xi. 7).

**Sharon.** A beautiful and fertile plain on West coast of Palestine.

**Achor,** in the East associated with early history of Israel (Joshua vii. 26; Hosea ii. 15).

(Pp. 92-107.)

**Gad**; the deity of Good fortune = Jupiter. See Josh. xi. 17, where Baal-gad is mentioned. Also Gen. xxx. 11 (R.V.).

**Meni**; the deity of Destiny = Saturn.

**Gardens** (p. 96). "Behind one in the midst" omitted in LXX. It is impossible to tell to what the Heb. refers, as the text is mutilated in some way.

**Tarshish** in Spain = Tartessus.

**Phut** read for Pul. LXX. has Put. African Tribes bordering Egypt (see Jer. xlvi. 9). Phut may be either Punt or Phut Javan, *i.e.*, Cyrene.

**Tubal**—living in region round the Black Sea. (Ezek. xxvii. 13.)

**Javan**, *i.e.*, Ionia. The Greek Colonies in Asia Minor.

**Priests** are here distinguished from Levites as in the Levitical legislation. Not distinguished—Deut. xviii. 1; Jer. xxxiii. 18. The distinction made, Ezek. xliv. 10, 11; Ezra i. 5; and always in Numbers.

**And they.** This last verse did not seem a pleasing ending, hence it was followed by repetition of v. 23. (See Mark ix. 44.)

**The word.** The prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the seventy years of captivity, and the subsequent restoration is given first in outline about 606 B.C. in ch. xxv. 12, and then more in detail in 588 B.C. in ch. xxx. 3.

**Darius**, king of Persia from 521 to 486 B.C.

**Haggai** prophesied about 520-510 B.C. Nothing is known about him.

**Zerubbabel**, so-called because born in Babylon: he belonged to the royal house of David. His Persian name was Sheshbazzar (Ezra i. 8).

**Joshua** was the High Priest in the recognised succession. (Jer. xxxvi. 26.)

**Wealth** is taken as the simplest equivalent of the desirable things of the nations. To make the word refer to the Messiah is not only to stretch the Heb., but also to imagine the existence of a more universal longing for the Messiah than can be proved.

**There.** The prophet would point significantly as he spoke.

**Zechariah**, a prophet contemporary with Haggai. A prophet of the same name lived in Isaiah's time.

**Vision.** Hozeh, Amos vii. 12: Hazon, Obad. 1: Nabhi, Exod. vii. 1: Roeh, 1 Sam. ix. 9: Mar'oth, Ezek. i. 1.

**The Accuser** or the adversary. This is the meaning of Satan. In the Post-exilic writings this great accuser of the brethren is thought of as appearing in the councils of God. (See Job i. 6.) Christ addressed Peter as his adversary (Matt. xvi. 23). In Ps. cix. 6 Satan might be better translated, adversary. The N.T. doctrine of Satan was not yet reached.

(Pp. 110-135.)

**Ephah**, a measure of capacity—here viewed as a vessel.

**Shinar.** See above = Sunir or Sumer.

**Heldai**, one of the three deputies from Babylon. Helem and Heldai are one and the same person. Hen must be taken as a noun meaning kindness, and not as name of a person.

**Bethel.** Here taken as a place from which a deputation came to enquire of Zechariah, and not translated as in A.V. The persons here named have Chaldean names. But the passage is difficult.

**Fifth** month—in this month the city had been burnt, while the fast in the seventh month was associated with the death of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 2 ; xli. 1).

**Malachi**, the last Canonical prophet : prophesied about 430 B.C. probably in connection with Nehemiah's great work. The personality of this prophet has been called in question on the ground that the name means "My messenger." But this prophecy has a style of its own.

**Second time.** The evil of alien marriages had been repressed first by Ezra (x. 10), and then by Nehemiah (xiii. 23).

**One.** The one here referred to seems to have been Abraham.

**Horeb**, named as the place where the law was given (Exod. xvii. 6 ; Deut. i. 6 ; v. 2.) The later Sinai revelation is mentioned (Exod. xix. 10 ; xxxi. 18 ; Acts vii. 30).

**Elijah**, the great restorer of the Law, as Moses had been its originator. It became a cherished expectation that one like unto Elijah, if not himself, would yet appear to do similar work to that done in Ahab's time.

**Great sea**, *i.e.*, the Mediterranean.

**Son of man.** This really means only one in human form, and indicates the essential contrast between the heads of other kingdoms, represented by wild beasts, and the head of the true kingdom. This title was chosen by Christ to express his true Humanity.

**Time** and times. A time might mean one year, times two years. The period then would be about three-and-a-half years, or 168-165 B.C.

**Shushan** = Susa, which was the royal capital of Persia, and the seat of the sovereign (Neh. i. 1 ; Esther ii. 8).

**Ulai** flowing into the Persian Gulf. But probably the river here referred to had two branches, between which Daniel saw his vision. In this case it would correspond to the Kercha and not the Huron of modern times.

**Chosen.** This name is given to Judah. It was chosen by God ; His delight was in it ; thus from a divine point of view it is called the pleasant land.

(Pp. 135-142.)

**King** in ch. ix. 1 = the Median Emperor ; see page 239.

**Weeks** are here regarded as weeks of seven days in ch. x. 3, but as working or secular weeks of six days in ch. ix. 24. See page 234.

**Tigris** = Hiddekel, which flowed through Persia (Gen. ii. 14).

**Very fine** = meaning of Uphaz here. (See Jer. x. 9.)

**Michael**, regarded as the guardian angel of Israel. Later on, as the doctrine of angels was completed, taken as an archangel (Jude 9).

**Grecia**, *i.e.*, the Macedonian country.

**Fourth**, *i.e.*, Xerxes 486-465 B.C. Omitting the brief reign of Smerdis, Xerxes who succeeded Darius was the fourth Persian ruler, and a very mighty one. His campaign against Greece is well known.

**A mighty** king, *i.e.*, Alexander the Great 333 B.C. His kingdom on his decease in 312 was divided not among his heirs, but among his four chief generals, Seleucus receiving Syria or the kingdom of the North ; Ptolemy, Egypt or the kingdom of the South ; Cassander, Macedonia ; and Lysimachus, Thrace.

**The West**, *i.e.*, the Roman Empire, which on the successful close of the Punic wars began to establish its power in the East.

**Abomination** of desolation. This was the heathen altar that Antiochus Epiphanes erected in the Temple.

**God of fortresses.** This Syrian conqueror made this deity his god.

**Seas.** The reference is to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean.

**Days.** The 1290 days = rather more than three years seven months, while the 1335 days = three years eight and a half months would carry the saints on to the end of 165 B.C. or beginning of 164 B.C., when again the worship of Jehovah went on uninterrupted.

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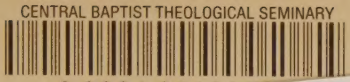

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